

Community Issues Report

SECOND QUARTER 2010

Meredith Corporation
WHNS FOX Carolina

07/5/10

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COMMUNITY ISSUES

4/1/10 – 6/30/10

Consumer, Health & Safety

An interest in knowing about events that impact our daily lives. A need for information about how to be wise shoppers of goods and services and how to live healthy and safe lives.

Crime

A need to know about crime and law enforcement activities and a concern for personal safety.

Education

A concern about the money and skills needed to improve schools and an interest in improving student's quality of education.

Environment

A concern for how the environment is affected by human activity.

Government

An interest in how government affects our personal lives

Jobs/Economy/Growth

An interest in the local and national economic outlook and the impact growth has on our communities

Quality of Life

An interest in things that improve one's satisfaction with life.

The following pages list representative samples of program segments from The Ten O'clock Newscast, The News at 6:30 Newscast and The Morning Newscast during this quarter that respond to our ascertained issues. Each segment was 20 seconds to 3 minutes in length (except as otherwise reported).

The following pages also identify issue-responsive episodes of programs, which are listed under the appropriate issue.

WHNS also broadcasts public service announcements, news and weather cut-ins as needed to inform local community of breaking news and emergencies.

Attachments



Consumer, Health & Safety

PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED

SECOND QUARTER 2010

Problem/Need: **CONSUMER, HEALTH & SAFETY**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
Saturdays (airs weekly)	6:30am	TODAY'S HOMEOWNER

Description: A half-hour weekly television show that features information on how to maintain and improve your home, both inside and out. The approach to home improvement helps everyone from the experienced do-it-yourselfer to the first time homeowner. Projects are taken from start to finish in each weekly episode. (30:00)

April 2, 2010

Shoppers in South Carolina are quickly snapping up rebates for energy-efficient appliances. Also: Read Rebate Rules For South Carolina More than half of the \$3.9 million set aside for rebates on Energy Star certified appliances were claimed by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, the first day the incentives were offered as part of the federal stimulus and recovery law. At that time, the South Carolina Energy Office said on its Web site that less than \$1.7 million remained for the rebates of \$50 to \$100 on clothes washers, refrigerators and dishwashers. About \$282,000 of the rebates of up to \$500 for water heaters and central air-conditioning units remained. The rebates will be applied at store checkouts for smaller appliances. Companies installing whole-house equipment like water heaters and heating systems will reserve rebates online and give customers mail-in forms.

April 2, 2010

Deaths fell almost 15 percent at hospitals after they started using checklists to monitor patient care, according to a study published in the BMJ. The checklists, known as care bundles, were tested on three hospitals that serve about 500,000 patients in London. They were used in 2006 and 2007 for 13 situations, including stroke, heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The rate of death at the hospitals fell 14.5 percent from the year prior to the testing. The authors of the study said that it is possible to target care bundles across a wide range of diagnoses in busy hospitals.

April 5, 2010

Airline travelers in the Carolinas should expect longer waits as security is upgraded at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. Multiple media outlets reported that officials plan to close a security checkpoint from Monday through the end of April to install full-body scanners. Charlotte is one of a new wave of airports getting the equipment as the country beefs up effort to find hidden explosives after an attempted Christmas Day bombing. There are now 44 full-image body scanners at 21 U.S. airports. Charlotte is getting some of the 150 additional machines bought with money from the federal stimulus package. Some fliers complain that the body-imaging technology is intrusive because the scanners reveal more bodily detail than passengers might want.

April 5, 2010

If you're planning on buying an iPad when it goes on sale this Saturday, you have some deciding to do. Unlike the iPhone, there are six different versions of the iPad, ranging in price from \$500 to \$830. The three models shipping this weekend are Wi-Fi only, while another three -- shipping late April -- include both Wi-Fi and 3G connectivity. Your first decision is between those two fundamental differences: Wi-Fi only, or 3G plus Wi-Fi? After you decide which route to take, from there you need to pick a storage capacity: 16 GB, 32 GB or 64 GB. For a lot of us, the decision is complicated by the fact that we already own an iPhone or iPod Touch -- or another smartphone, for that matter. So let's break it down for you. **Wi-Fi or 3G?** Let's face it: in its current state, the iPad is primarily a device you'll use to veg out on your couch for watching movies, listening to music and playing games. A lot of these media-consumption activities are going to work just fine offline, so even in places where you're without Wi-Fi, you shouldn't feel completely deprived. For the majority of users, Wi-Fi will probably be sufficient, assuming you have a wireless network set up in your home. (Even AT&T seems to believe that the iPad is mostly going to be a Wi-Fi-driven device.) But nonetheless there's a strong argument for choosing one of the 3G-equipped models. If you travel

often, you'll inevitably find yourself in a hotel lobby or restaurant that doesn't have Wi-Fi, and at that point the lack of 3G could be irritating. Also, if you commute for work, you'll probably enjoy a 3G connection for those times when you're on the train or bus -- assuming you can get a signal from AT&T in those spots. On top of that, the 3G model of the iPad includes GPS, while the Wi-Fi-only version does not, making it a more capable traveling device. 3G will cost you more, of course. Each 3G model costs \$130 more than the corresponding Wi-Fi counterpart with the same storage. What makes the 3G option especially intriguing for the iPad is there's no contract. It's all month-to-month, and you only buy a plan when you need one: \$15 a month for 250 MB or \$30 a month for unlimited data. During the months when you're not traveling, you can simply turn the 3G service off. In short, if you're a very mobile person, the 3G model probably suits you best. If you're a homebody, you'll be happy with the Wi-Fi version. **Storage** If you take the Wi-Fi route, you're probably going to be using the iPad mostly in your living room for consuming media such as movies, music and graphic-intensive games -- all of which will be stored on the iPad's flash drive. For that reason, larger storage should be more important for Wi-Fi only customers. We'd recommend either going with the 32-GB or 64-GB model for Wi-Fi-only models, as you'll fill up 16 gigs pretty fast. If you go with 3G, you'll have the flexibility of accessing your digital life through the cloud in addition to the iPad drive itself anywhere you go. So for the 3G route, storage is a bit less important. If you don't have a lot of music or movies, a 16-GB model with cloud-based apps, such as Dropbox or Pandora, could very well suffice. (One could argue that you can access your data through the cloud with a Wi-Fi-only device as well, but we'd say it's inconvenient to live in the cloud without a constant internet connection.) With all that said, we strongly favor the 32-GB model for 3G, because its feature set strikes a chord for those with a healthy balance of work and play. We'd argue that the 64-GB iPad 3G is a bit too expensive (\$830) and impractical. The 64-GB iPad 3G model is best designed for media-obsessed workaholics -- a pretty small group of users. **The iPhone/iPod Touch factor** If you already have an iPhone or an iPod Touch, a good question to ask is whether an iPad will fit in to your life at all. The truth is the iPad is so new that it hasn't proven to become a necessity for anyone, and if you're using an iPhone, you might find it fulfills most of a tablet's potential functions already. Also unknown is the degree to which the iPad will play nicely with your iPhone -- in particular, whether it'll be possible to tether the iPhone to the iPad, which would eliminate the need to spend more money on a 3G model and its associated monthly fees. Steve Jobs said in an e-mail to a customer that tethering an iPhone to an iPad would not be doable, but we doubt that's completely true, if you're willing to take a few risks. There's a good chance the iPad will be jailbroken (i.e., hacked) as soon as it's released, so a tethering workaround seems probable -- though be aware that jailbreaking can void your warranty. If you own an iPhone, our advice would be to wait a few weeks to see if a tethering solution emerges before deciding between the 3G or Wi-Fi model. And if you own an iPod Touch, which was cleverly touted by Jobs as an "iPhone with training wheels," then the iPad 3G is a good opportunity to graduate to the cloud. The best part is that you won't need to commit to a hefty monthly contract like you would with an iPhone, so an iPad 3G is all the more appealing.

April 9, 2010

The Spartanburg City Council is considering a smoking ban, according to a report in the Spartanburg Herald-Journal. The newspaper said that council will discuss the measure that would ban smoking in bars and restaurants at a meeting on Monday. The council will then decide whether to move forward on the issue. Council members would not vote on the proposal during Monday's meeting, but if they decide to let the measure move forward, the public would have a chance to voice their opinions on the possible ban at a later meeting.

April 12, 2010

Pilots from Shaw Air Force Base in central South Carolina are beginning several weeks of nighttime training. The flights by the F-16 pilots begin Monday and are taking place so that they can train with special night vision equipment. Air Force officials say the pilots also will practice tactics that help them learn how to maneuver in the dark and survive during combat. Officials said the nighttime takeoffs and landings may be heard by residents in central South Carolina throughout the month of April. F-16 crews fly close air support missions to protect Army, Navy and Marine Corps units on the ground.

April 13, 2010

You've probably seen fire sprinklers in buildings or businesses and now there's a debate over whether they should be mandatory for new homes under construction. "What it's about is a mandate and this is the government trying to force people to make this big investment in fire sprinklers," said Thomas Dillard, the president of the Greenville Home Builders Association. He said he and members of the organization encourage safety and even installing sprinklers, but he said it should be a choice.

for homeowners. "If you add \$5 a square foot or more for a fire sprinkler system, the average size for a house is 2,000 square feet. That's \$10,000 that you're adding to the price of a new home," Dillard said. Right now there are federal construction standards that call for new homes to have fire sprinklers. But state lawmakers are looking over bills in the House and Senate that could reject those standards, meaning if it passes, sprinklers wouldn't be mandatory in South Carolina. Dillard said the goal is to keep homes affordable and educate families on smoke detectors. He said if not, families would move back into older homes. "Many of the older homes don't have smoke detectors, which I think actually is going to cause more deaths in the long run," he said. Some who don't want the mandate said they are also concerned about insurance rates going up. However, some fire safety advocates said if homeowners have sprinklers, it would be an incentive and rates to go down. On Tuesday, lawmakers are scheduled to debate both bills, which are now in the House and Senate.

April 15, 2010

South Carolina senators on Wednesday approved raising the nation's lowest cigarette tax by 50 cents a pack. By a 32-12 vote, the Senate gave final approval to raising the current tax of 7 cents. The tax hike could generate about \$130 million for Medicaid programs. The bill is now bound for a House conference committee and an almost certain veto by Gov. Mark Sanford. South Carolina's current cigarette tax hasn't increased since 1977, when a pack cost 49 cents. Senators were scrambling to make it more likely that raising the tax would survive a veto threat and agreed to strip plans to use part of the tax increase to pay for agriculture product marketing and rural projects marketing and rural projects.

April 15, 2010

The Young Upstate Republicans and WORD radio sponsored the second annual tax day protest Thursday night in Greenville at Chief's Wings and Firewater. South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford attended the rally. "Government ought to do what businesses and families across South Carolina are doing, which is in tough times they actually trim the budget," Sanford said. Organizers said everyone had the opportunity to sign a resolution speaking out against wasteful government spending on a 20-foot banner, which they said will be delivered to the U.S. Congress. There was also a tax day protest in Boiling Springs Thursday night off Double Bridge Road next to the library. Several Republican state senators and candidates running for state office were at the event. Some of the people there said the group was standing up for principles, not parties. "I think it's a great thing that the neighbors are able to come out and voice their opinions about what's going on with the government," Spartanburg County resident Jerry Teamer said. "I really do. They say a lot of good things that I agree with." There will be another tea party event Saturday at the Bi-Lo center in Greenville.

May 4, 2010

The Federal Communications Commission recently granted WHNS-TV permission to increase its broadcasting power. The increase happened on April 30 when FOX Carolina boosted its signal from 160 kilowatts to 400 kilowatts, more than doubling its transmission power. The increase means some viewers who could not pick up the station's broadcast signal before might be able to do so now. The power increase should improve the overall strength of the station's signal and make it more stable. This may be especially true for people who live in outlying areas of the Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson television market. Station engineers said that viewers who have not been able to pick up WHNS on a television set or converter box should re-scan. They said that once a re-scan is complete, viewers should check to see if the box recognizes FOX Carolina on channel 21. Engineers said that for most people in the Greenville, Spartanburg area, the best position for their antenna is near a north facing window. Anyone who lives north of Asheville, may have better results positioning their antenna near a south or southwest facing window. For more information on the power increase, viewers can call 864-288-2100. Viewers can also visit http://www.dtv.gov/video/vid_rescan.html for more information on rescanning their DTV boxes.

May 4, 2010

Ingredients used by Johnson & Johnson in some of the 40 varieties of children's cold medicines recalled last week were contaminated with bacteria, according to a report by the Food and Drug Administration. Agency officials said Tuesday none of the company's finished products tested positive for the contaminants, though such testing is not definitive. "We think the risk to consumers at this point is remote," said Deborah Autor, director of FDA's drug compliance office, on a call with reporters. The FDA report, which was posted online, lists more than 20 manufacturing problems found at the McNeil Consumer Healthcare plant in Fort Washington, Pa., where the formulas were made. The recalled products include children and infant formulations of Tylenol, Motrin, Zyrtec and Benadryl. FDA inspectors visited the plant in mid-April and wrapped up their inspection Friday. J&J issued its "voluntary" recall later that night. Among other problems, FDA inspectors said the company did not have

laboratory facilities to test drug ingredients and failed to follow up on customer complaints. J&J did not investigate more than 46 complaints received in the last year about "black or dark specks" in Tylenol products, according to the FDA's report. Additionally, inspectors found some pieces of equipment covered with thick layers of dust, while others were held together with duct tape. In a statement Tuesday, J&J called the problems cited by the FDA "unacceptable to us, and not indicative of how McNeil Consumer Healthcare intends to operate." The health conglomerate, which is based in New Brunswick, N.J., said production at the plant won't resume until the problems have been fixed. The FDA reiterated that serious medical problems with the products are unlikely, but advised consumers to stop using the medicine as a precaution. Parents are instructed to use generic alternatives instead. J&J's McNeil Consumer Healthcare unit has said some of the recalled medicines may have a higher concentration of the active ingredient than listed on the bottle. Others may contain particles, while still others may contain inactive ingredients that do not meet testing requirements. FDA leadership told reporters Tuesday that they first met with J&J in February to discuss manufacturing problems identified in a warning letter about another J&J plant. The agency decided to step up inspections of the company's facilities based on those problems. "That warning letter brought us to the point where we thought it was necessary to sit down with management and discuss our concerns," Autor said. FDA officials said they are considering taking additional action against J&J, ranging from issuing more warning letters to pursuing criminal action. Last week's sweeping recall, which involved products sold in the U.S. and 11 other countries, is the latest quality issue to taint J&J's over-the-counter medicine franchise. In January, the company recalled a line of adult Tylenol pain relievers due to complaints of a moldy smell associated with wooden pallets used to transport the drugs.

May 7, 2010

Pump prices that typically begin a sprint for their annual highs right about now, might be losing steam well ahead of the summer driving season. The price of oil fell by more than 10 percent over the past week, as stocks prices dropped and the dollar got stronger. Gasoline futures also fell sharply, a decline that will make its way to the pump price in a matter of weeks. The average price nationally for a gallon of unleaded regular gasoline Friday was \$2.92 a gallon, according to AAA, Wright Express and Oil Price Information Service. That's down almost a penny from Thursday. A gallon is still running about 78 cents higher today than a year ago, but there are indications that won't last. "Retail gasoline peaked last year on June 19," Kloza said. "It is conceivable that Americans next month might pay less than they paid in June 2009 when retail prices topped out at about \$2.70 gallon." Tumbling oil prices can make it more affordable to fill up your tank. A barrel of benchmark crude fell \$2 to settle at \$75.11 a barrel Friday on the New York Mercantile Exchange. That's the lowest per-barrel price since mid-February. Crude prices have dropped more than \$12 a barrel from an 18-month high on Monday. Plunging stock markets have helped. A huge drop on the New York Stock Exchange Thursday left traders shaking Friday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell about 175 points after losing 348 points Thursday. The market rolled from small gains to losses throughout the day. Investors fear a European debt crisis, beginning with Greece, where protesters continue to clash with authorities over new austerity measures. That pushed the euro to a 14-month low and strengthened the dollar. Commodities priced in dollars, such as oil, become more expensive for investors holding foreign currencies when the dollar is stronger. The hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil gushing from a ruptured well in the Gulf of Mexico has done little to prop up prices. This week's government report on oil inventories showed oil stocks in the region grew again, with the Gulf Coast reporting a huge build of 2.52 million barrels. "Total stocks in the region remain at an 8.5 percent surplus to the 2004-08 (period)," said a report from energy consultancy Cameron Hanover. "The implication here is that the Deepwater Horizon spill is having no tangible impact on imports and even if it does, stock levels can comfortably absorb any knock-on shocks." Officials are monitoring the spill as it creeps closer to the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port at the mouth of the Mississippi. Tankers unload up to 1.2 million barrels a day of foreign oil to feed half the nation's refinery capacity. Heavy crude could reach the facility next week and force it to close. The Coast Guard would make that call. Phil Flynn, energy analyst with PFG Best in Chicago, said temporary shutdowns of the port in the past haven't moved gasoline prices much. "A short-term closure, might support prices for the short term but would not have a lasting impact," he said. If the port were to close for a longer period, the federal government could order oil drawn from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, he said. Flynn said the biggest worry is shipping through the Mississippi's Southwest Pass, where finished gasoline and other fuels move out in small tankers for U.S. ports. Interruption or delay in those supplies could push gasoline prices up, he said. So far, the pass has remained open though officials are preparing to scrub oily vessels, which could back up ship traffic. In other Nymex trading in June contracts on Friday, heating oil fell 3.42 cents to settle at \$2.0795 a gallon, and gasoline dropped 3.12 cents to settle at \$2.1251 a gallon. Natural gas rose 8.6 cents to settle at \$4.015 per 1,000 cubic feet. In London, Brent crude lost \$1.56 to settle at \$78.27 on the ICE futures exchange.

May 10, 2010

Federal regulators announced another recall of children's jewelry with high levels of the toxic metal cadmium Monday, also saying they've expanded their investigation in an effort to keep dangerous items off store shelves in the first place. A spokesman for the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission told The Associated Press its inspectors at 10 of the nation's largest ports are now screening children's jewelry -- typically imported from China -- for cadmium. "Our surveillance and detection program has now been expanded" through the use of special guns that shoot X-rays into jewelry to estimate how much cadmium each item might contain, spokesman Scott Wolfson said. Word of increased scrutiny came as the agency announced the voluntary recall of about 19,000 "Best Friends" charm bracelet sets made in China and sold exclusively at the jewelry and accessories store Claire's, which has more than 3,000 stores in North America and Europe. Agency scientists confirmed independent test results that were reported by AP in January, which showed high levels of cadmium in the "Best Friends" bracelet. The recall pertains only to such items previously sold at Claire's; several days after AP's initial investigation became public, the chain said it would immediately stop selling the item. While the CPSC does not release its results, testing done for the AP revealed that bracelets sold at Claire's contained up to 91 percent cadmium by weight, and shed alarming amounts during a test that examined how much cadmium children might be exposed to if they accidentally swallow the charms. "Cadmium is toxic if ingested by children and can cause adverse health effects," the agency said in its recall announcement. Medical research shows that cadmium in high levels is a known carcinogen and can harm kidneys and bones. Consumers should take away from children the bracelets, which were sold for about \$12, and return them to Claire's for a replacement or refund, according to the announcement. The CPSC identified the manufacturer as Dae Yeon Industries Corp., of China. As part of its announcement in January that it was pulling the item from store shelves, the chain released a statement saying the items were safe, but that the decision was made "out of an abundance of caution." On Monday, Claire's did not immediately respond to a request for comment, including why it had waited four months to agree to a recall for the "Best Friends" bracelets it had sold in the year before the AP story. Monday's recall was the third prompted by AP's investigation. Before this year, no consumer product in the United States had been recalled because of cadmium. Representatives of jewelry importers and manufacturers have rejected the idea that children's metal jewelry is unsafe. Michael Gale, the executive director of the Fashion Jewelry and Accessories Trade Association, has told several state legislatures that are considering strict limits on cadmium in jewelry that if those laws pass, it might be impossible to put any lower-priced children's jewelry on stores shelves where those laws apply.

May 23, 2010

Although gasoline prices are dropping ahead of the Memorial Day weekend and the start of the summer driving season, there's no sign motorists are rushing back to the pump to top off their tanks. Data released Monday by the Federal Highway Administration show the number of miles driven on U.S. roads rose in March compared with February, but still was below March 2009, in the depths of the recession. There is no sign of anything more than a modest increase in demand for gasoline so far this year. Last week's MasterCard SpendingPulse report showed consumption of gasoline for the first two weeks of May running about 1.3 percent ahead of last year. For the year, consumption has risen about 1 percent. Demand is 4 percent below 2007 levels, according to the MasterCard data, which tallies total gas sales paid by credit card, checks and cash. Drivers are logging about the same number of miles as they did in 2005. Analysts say the stubbornly high unemployment rate, muted consumer confidence and, until recently, rising gasoline prices have held back driving and gasoline demand. "The market is jittery and fundamentally weak and that has translated to discretionary gasoline use," said oil analyst and trader Stephen Schork. "It is a tenuous situation out there." Retail gasoline prices fell again Monday as this month's big drop in oil prices continues to work its way to the pump. The national average pump price fell 0.8 cents to \$2.793 per gallon, according to AAA, Wright Express and Oil Price Information Service. That's down nearly 14 cents from the May 6 price of \$2.93. Prices have dropped below \$2.50 per gallon in some areas. Gas prices are 37.5 cents higher than a year ago, but the gap is narrowing quickly. The Energy Information Administration will release its weekly report on retail gasoline prices later Monday. Efforts continue to control and clean up the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The spill has not affected prices or interfered with tankers carrying imported crude to Gulf ports or those taking refined products to other parts of the country. Oil prices, which have fallen more than 19 percent since hitting an 18-month high of \$87.15 per barrel just three weeks ago, rose slightly Monday. Benchmark crude for July delivery gained 17 cents to settle at \$70.21 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. In other Nymex trading in June contracts, heating oil added 0.26 cent to settle at \$1.8993 gallon, and gasoline rose 0.96 cent to settle at \$1.9708 a gallon. Natural gas fell 1.8 cents to settle at \$4.017 per 1,000 cubic feet. The Brent crude July contract in London fell 51 cents to settle at \$71.17 on the ICE futures exchange.

June 1, 2010

Officials issued a boil water advisory on Tuesday morning for residents in Anderson who are using Electric City Utilities. A statement from the utility said that a drop in system pressure was caused by a power outage at the Anderson Regional Joint Water System water treatment plant. It said that the drop in pressure may have contaminated the water. Residents were asked to

boil their water vigorously for a minute before using it for drinking, cooking or making ice. Tests are being conducted to determine if the water has been contaminated. There was no immediate word on when the advisory was expected to be lifted.

June 7, 2010

Chrysler is recalling nearly 600,000 minivans and Jeep Wranglers because of brake or wiring problems that could create safety issues, the company and federal regulators said Monday. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said on its website the automaker is recalling 288,968 Jeep Wranglers from the 2006 through 2010 model years due to a potential brake fluid leak. It also is recalling 284,831 Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country minivans from the 2008 and 2009 model years because a wiring problem can cause a fire inside the sliding doors. Neither problem has caused any crashes or injuries, according to Chrysler Group LLC. On the Jeeps, the front inner fender liners can rub against the brake fluid tubes and cause a leak. NHTSA says the leak could lead to a partial brake loss. The minivans can have improperly placed wires that can come into contact with sliding door hinges. That could cut through the insulation and in rare cases cause a fire inside the door, Chrysler and NHTSA said. Chrysler will notify owners and dealers about the repairs, which will be made free of charge. The recall is expected to start later this month. The Wranglers affected by the recall were made from May 15, 2006 through Aug. 9, 2010, according to NHTSA. The minivans were made from February 2007 through September 2007.

June 8, 2010

General Motors Co. said Tuesday it was recalling about 1.5 million vehicles worldwide to address a problem with a heated windshield wiper fluid system that could lead to a fire, its second recall over the issue in two years. The recall affects several pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles, crossovers and passenger car models from the 2006 to 2009 model years. GM conducted a similar recall in 2008 but came across new reports of fires in vehicles that had been fixed. GM said it would disable the heated washer fluid system module that could lead to fires. The Detroit automaker will pay owners and those leasing vehicles \$100 each since the feature is being disabled. GM said it was aware of five fires but there had been no injuries or crashes reported. Nearly 1.4 million vehicles are in the U.S. and more than 100,000 vehicles are in Canada, Mexico and other international markets. "While our analysis shows the number of incidents is very small compared with the number of vehicles on the road, we want our customers to have complete peace of mind," said Jeff Boyer, GM's executive director of safety. The recall covers the 2006-2009 model year Buick Lucerne, Cadillac DTS, and Hummer H2; 2008-2009 Buick Enclave and Cadillac CTS; 2007-2009 Cadillac Escalade, Escalade ESV and Escalade EXT; 2007-2009 Chevrolet Avalanche, Silverado, Suburban and Tahoe; 2007-2009 GMC Acadia, Sierra, Yukon and Yukon XL; 2007-2009 Saturn Outlook; and 2009 Chevrolet Traverse. The auto company said customers will begin to receive recall letters later this month but can contact their dealer to make an appointment to have the heated washer system removed. Dealers will remove the heated washer fluid module and reroute washer fluid hoses. GM said the technology, which helps melt ice in freezing temperatures, was available from only one supplier, Microheat Inc., of Farmington Hills, Mich., which went out of business, preventing GM from working with another supplier on an improved design. GM recalled more than 900,000 vehicles because of the heated washer fluid system in August 2008 because a short circuit on the circuit board could overheat the ground wire. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration had opened an investigation in February 2008 into 2007 Yukon and Tahoe vehicles over potential engine compartment fires. The government closed its investigation after the 2008 recall but GM later came across fires in vehicles that had been fixed under the previous recall, prompting the latest safety action. Owners can contact Buick at (866) 608-8080, Cadillac at (866) 982-2339, Chevrolet at (800) 630-2438, Saturn at (800) 972-8876, GMC at (866) 996-9463 and Hummer at (800) 732-5493.

June 11, 2010

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announced the recall of more than 181,000 GE front-load washing machines over a potential fire hazard. The CPSC said a wire on the washing machines can break and touch a metal portion of the washtub, creating a shock and fire hazard. Manufactured in China by GE Appliances & Lighting of Louisville, Ky., the company said it has received seven reports of flames coming from the washer and causing smoke damage, but no reports of injuries. The washers were sold nationwide between December 2006 and May 2010. Consumers wanting more details can call 1- 888-345-4124 or go to <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

June 14, 2010

It looks like the nearly six-week run in lower gasoline prices is just about over. Gasoline prices have dropped about 8 percent since hitting \$2.93 per gallon on May 6 on the back of lower oil prices. Pump prices fell 0.3 cent to a national average of \$2.698 a gallon Monday, according to AAA, Wright Express and Oil Price Information Service. Prices are now about the same

as the 2009 peak. "We may wobble down another nickel or up a nickel, but what you see now on the street probably will be close to what you pay for July 4th weekend," said OPIS' Tom Kloza. Kloza expects that prices likely will climb beginning in July as hurricane season starts in earnest and as new investments are made in crude for the third quarter. Investors worry that hurricanes can damage crude and natural gas production in the Gulf of Mexico and refineries along the Gulf coast. Shutdowns can send prices higher. Gasoline prices have dropped 2.6 cents in the past week and are 17.9 cents below where they were a month ago. Prices are 3.5 cents higher than a year ago. The Energy Information Administration will release its weekly report on retail gasoline prices later Monday. Motorists have benefited as oil prices fell since reaching an 18-month-high of \$87.15 a barrel in early May. Worries over the European debt crisis, a big drop in stock prices and a stronger dollar helped push oil below \$70. Prices have since come back, with benchmark crude for July delivery rising \$1.34 to settle at \$75.12 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Stock markets gained Monday. Crude investors often look to equities as a barometer of overall investor sentiment. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up about 40 points in afternoon trading. The NASDAQ and the S&P 500 were higher as well. Stocks backed off earlier highs after Moody's downgraded Greece's credit rating. A weaker dollar and a stronger euro also helped oil prices. Since crude is priced in dollars it becomes cheaper to investors holding other currencies when the dollar loses value. BP said Monday that the cost of its massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has risen to \$1.6 billion. The estimate does not include future costs for lawsuits already filed against the company over the spill that began nearly two months ago. The spill, so far, has not affected oil prices, although BP shares have tumbled. BP stock was down almost 8 percent on Monday. In other Nymex trading in July contracts, heating oil rose 1.97 cents to settle at \$2.0250 a gallon, and gasoline gained 2.67 cents to settle at \$2.0764 a gallon. Natural gas jumped 22.5 cents to settle at \$5.006 per 1,000 cubic feet. Brent crude gained 85 cents to settle at \$75.20 a barrel on the ICE futures exchange.

June 15, 2010

The National Weather Service issued a heat advisory for the southern Upstate on Tuesday. The advisory is in effect from noon until 8 p.m. for Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens and Union counties in South Carolina and Elbert County in Georgia. The weather service said that high temperatures for the advised area are forecast to climb into the upper 90s. Some could break the century-mark, they said. They said that the high heat, combined with the high humidity, should lead to heat index values near 105 degrees for the area. Monday's highs of more than 90 degrees for much of the Upstate are about 10 degrees above the average for this time of year, FOX Carolina chief meteorologist Kendra Kent said. Overnight lows will not bring a tremendous amount of relief from the heat, Kent said. She said that low temperatures are forecast to only drop to the 70s in the Upstate and upper 60s in the mountains. Experts with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest people spend as much time in the air conditioning as possible during a heat wave. They said that people who must spend time outside should drink plenty of nonalcoholic, non-caffeinated beverage, wear lightweight and light-colored clothing and take frequent breaks in the shade. Experts also said that no one should ever leave a pet or child in a closed, parked vehicle. They also suggest that residents check on elderly neighbors to make sure they are coping with the heat as they are at greater risk of suffering from heat-related illnesses. Don't forget the sunblock. Experts recommend an SPF of at least 15 that says "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on its label. Kent said that a weak cold front will move into the area by midweek, knocking temperature down a degree or two, but will not provide much relief.

June 17, 2010

For the second time in a week, a Norfolk Southern train has derailed-- this time near Asheville. Train line representative Robin Chapman said that 10 cars and two locomotives of the mixed-freight train left the tracks about 20 miles outside of Asheville at 5:40 a.m. Thursday. He said that crews have three of the 10 cars upright as of Thursday afternoon. Chapman said that the cars that flipped over were empty and there were no hazardous materials involved in the derailment. He said that one of the locomotives spilled about 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel. The train was headed from Linwood, N.C., to Knoxville, Tenn. Chapman said that about a dozen trains travel that stretch of tracks daily and that some train service will be disrupted until the cleanup is complete. Last Thursday, another Norfolk Southern train left the tracks in Liberty, spilling hazardous chemicals and prompting the evacuation of hundreds of homes. Crews are still working to finish the cleanup of that derailment. Chapman said that the cause of both derailments is under investigation.

June 21, 2010

Motorists heading out for the long July 4th weekend will find that filling up the family car is getting more costly. Retail prices for gasoline have climbed over the past week and are headed back toward a national average of \$2.80 to \$2.90 per gallon with higher prices on the West Coast, said Tom Kloza of the Oil Price Information Service. Prices dropped for about six weeks as oil prices fell over worries that the European debt crisis could spread and crush the global economic recovery and demand for

crude. Those worries have since ebbed, oil is rising again and the stock market has started to recover some of its recent losses. Kloza said he expects the price increases to be modest. "Much higher prices would roil the economic picture, and the oil price rally has been largely on the coattails of the stock market recovery," he said. Prices rose 0.3 cent to a national average of \$2.737 per gallon on Monday, according to AAA, Wright Express and Oil Price Information Service. Prices have risen 3.9 cents in the past week and are 7.5 cents below levels of a month ago. Pump prices are 4.4 cents higher than a year ago. The government's Energy Information Administration will release its weekly report on retail gasoline prices later Monday. Oil prices gave up earlier gains on Monday afternoon. China's move to end its currency's peg to the dollar initially fanned enthusiasm for crude, since a stronger yuan will make dollar-based commodities like oil cheaper in China and bolster demand. But uncertainty about how quickly China may implement currency changes put a damper on rising prices and knocked oil back. Crude lost 21 cents at \$76.97 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after rising as high as \$78.92. Another currency development also brought oil down: the euro faded against the dollar. A stronger dollar makes oil less attractive to investors holding foreign currency. In other Nymex trading, heating oil lost 0.30 cent at \$2.1259 a gallon, gasoline dropped 2.08 cents to \$2.1268 a gallon and natural gas fell 16.7 cents to \$4.830 per 1,000 cubic feet. Brent crude lost 34 cents at \$77.88 on the ICE futures exchange.

June 24, 2010

More than 2 million cribs from seven companies were recalled Thursday amid concerns that babies can suffocate, become trapped or fall from the cribs. Most of the cribs were drop-sides, which have a side rail that moves up and down so parents can lift children from them more easily. That movable side, however, can malfunction or detach from the crib, creating a dangerous gap where babies' heads can become trapped, leading to suffocation or strangulation. The companies involved in the recall were Evenflo, Delta Enterprises Corp., Child Craft, Jardine Enterprises, LaJobi, Million Dollar Baby and Simmons Juvenile Products Inc. No deaths were associated with the cribs, but there were reports of at least 16 entrapments of infants. In one case, a child was found unconscious and later hospitalized. In the announcement from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, all seven companies recalled drop-side cribs. Delta and Child Craft also acknowledged problems with fixed-side cribs. Drop-sides have increasingly come under scrutiny, with several warnings from the CPSC in the last year that the cribs can be deadly. CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum has pledged to ban their manufacture and sale by year's end. "This new recall announcement is part of a larger effort by CPSC to clean up the marketplace from many of these unsafe cribs," said Tenenbaum. "Most of these recalled cribs have dangerous drop-sides, while the Delta crib can pose a danger to babies if the mattress support is installed incorrectly." CPSC urged parents to stop using the cribs and contact the manufacturers for repair kits to immobilize the drop-side or information to make the cribs more secure. The recalls involved about: - 750,000 Jenny Lind drop-side cribs distributed by Evenflo Inc. - 747,000 Delta drop-side cribs. Delta is also urging parents to check all fixed and drop-side cribs that use wooden stabilizer bars to support the mattress. The company says the bars can be installed upside down, causing the mattress platform to collapse. CPSC spokesman Scott Wolfson said Delta "was not cooperative with providing the full number of units involved in the mattress support assembly problem." - 306,000 Bonavita, Babi Italia and ISSI drop-side cribs manufactured by LaJobi Inc. - 130,000 Jardine drop-side cribs imported by Toys R Us. - 156,000 Million Dollar Baby drop-side cribs. - 50,000 Simmons drop-side cribs. - 40,000 to 50,000 Child Craft brand stationary-side cribs and an unknown number of Child Craft brand drop-sides. Child Craft ceased operations last summer and sold its name to Foundations Worldwide Inc., which did not manufacture or sell any of the recalled cribs but will offer rebates for some of them. With Thursday's recall, 9 million drop-side cribs have been recalled in the past five years. Drop-sides have been blamed in the deaths of at least 32 infants and toddlers since 2000. The cribs are suspected in another 14 infant fatalities during that time. Congress is also concerned about the cribs. Legislation has been introduced by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., to outlaw the sale and manufacture of drop-sides. A similar bill has been introduced in the House by Democratic Rep. Joe Crowley, also of New York. Drop-side cribs have been around for decades, but consumer advocates say they are not as sturdy as those of the past. Older cribs had metal rods that guided the drop-side up and down. Many newer cribs have plastic tracking guides for the drop-side that critics say are more prone to breaking. The Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, which represents over 90 percent of the crib industry, urges parents not to use cribs with loose or missing parts. It also says consumers should not use a crib that is older than 10 years because it may not comply with current standards.

June 30, 2010

At Qwikes in downtown Greenville customers move in and out quickly to grab what they need. Michael Bagwell often picks up a pack of smokes there. "I just paid \$3.76 for a pack of cigarettes," Bagwell said. He's pretty fired up about a new tax increase on smokes. "We're taxed enough right? We get taxed when you pay, you get taxed when you buy anything. When is it going to be enough taxes?" On Thursday, smokers in South Carolina will have to pay 50 cents more per pack for their cigarettes. For example, a pack of smoke that costs \$4.05 now, will cost \$4.55 on Thursday. Chris Sherbert, a store clerk at

Qwikkees, said because of the tax increase, customers are stocking up on cigarettes. "Plenty of people are buying three to four packs at a time," Sherbert said. He said he already hears complaints from customers about prices, but said the tax is needed. "They say things like, 'They weren't like this three months ago.' But, I just think it's going to a good cause with it going to good tax money," Sherbert said. Lawmakers said the money will help offset cost and go to health programs, but smokers like Ryan Kelly said they are just blowing smoke. "'Why make cigarettes more expensive?'" Kelly said. "Why can't you make alcohol more expensive?" Kelly said that, for him, an additional 50 cents per pack will cost too much. "I'll probably smoke less," he said. But, Bagwell said he doesn't plan to quit and he knows exactly where to go and get his pack of smokes.

Attachments



Crime

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
SECOND QUARTER 2010**

Problem/Need: **CRIME**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
Saturdays	8:00pm	COPS
Saturdays (airs weekly)	8:30pm	COPS
Monday – Friday	1:00pm	COPS
Monday – Friday	1:30pm	COPS

Description: COPS follows law enforcement officers as they answer calls and deal with the subjects and victims involved in the complaints and crimes. (30:00)

Saturdays (airs weekly)	9:00pm	AMERICA'S MOST WANTED
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Description: AMERICA'S MOST WANTED is hosted by John Walsh. The show profiles fugitives and wanted criminals who are being sought by federal, state, or local authorities. The program gives viewers a phone number to call to provide information. (60:00)

Saturdays (airs weekly)	2:30am	MISSING
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Description: Missing is a weekly half-hour reality series featuring actual cases of missing individuals, both adult and juvenile, from across the United States. (30:00)

Monday – Sunday	10:00 pm	FOX CAROLINA'S MOST WANTED
Monday – Friday	5:00a-9:00am	

Description: The FOX Carolina's Most Wanted airs during the Ten O'clock News on various nights Monday thru Sunday and The Morning News Monday thru Friday. Each segment profiles locally wanted criminals and gives viewers a phone number to call to provide information. Each segment is 45 seconds.

April 1, 2010

Twenty people were arrested in connection with a prostitution sting last Friday, Greenville County deputies said. Deputies said that the sting was conducted near the intersections of Highway 123 and North Texas Road, as well as, Old Buncombe Road and Tampa Street between the hours of noon and 9 p.m. Investigators said that two female deputies with the sheriff's office posed as prostitutes at the intersections and were approached by several people who asked them to perform sex acts in exchange for money or valuable items. They said that once a person offered money or valuables to the undercover deputy, other deputies moved in and arrested the person. The following people were charged with loitering to engage in prostitution: Mark Miles, Joseph Vicars, Harold Overhold and Jedderick Smith. The following people were charged with prostitution: Eddy Burdette, Alan Pruitt, Charles Melton, Robert Giron, Donald Martin, Charles Cupka, Brandon Lloyd, Ciko Morales-Lozada, Wilver Garcia-Cornelio, Samuel Fullard and Benjamin Barbaree. Charged with interfering with police were Mystie Lane and Steven Smith. Jonathan Moore was charged with loitering to engage and drug activity. Jedderick Smith was also charged with simple possession of marijuana, interfering with police and assault of a high and aggravated nature. Lewallen was also charged with unlawful conduct toward a child. Burdette was also charged with possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance, possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance near a school and possession of other controlled substances. Steven Smith was also charged with simple possession of marijuana and public disorderly conduct. Lane, Lewallen

and Jedderick Smith were each being held at the Greenville County Detention Center. All others have met their bonds and were released from jail.

April 2, 2010

Ten people in the United States illegally have pleaded guilty in South Carolina to defrauding the IRS of \$13 million by filing more than 10,000 income tax returns. Federal prosecutors said Thursday that the group pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud and to entering the U.S. without authorization. Prosecutors said that the defendants operated tax preparation businesses in Spartanburg, Boiling Springs and Forest City, N.C., and claimed more than \$22 million in refunds between 2006 and 2009. The IRS said it paid out \$13 million in refunds before discovering the fraud. Two other people associated with the case pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice last month. All 12 will be sentenced later. Prosecutors said that more charges are likely.

April 5, 2010

Deputies serving an eviction notice to an Asheville man last week found nearly 400 marijuana plants inside the home, officials said. Lt. Ross Dillingham, of the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, said that civil process deputies were serving the notice to 31-year-old William Cherry on Thursday. He said that the deputies discovered an indoor marijuana farm, including 398 plants. Dillingham said that the drugs have a street value of \$995,000. Cherry was charged with manufacturing marijuana, maintaining a dwelling for the purpose of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was released after promising to appear in court.

April 6, 2010

Two people have been charged after a rock thrown from an overpass in North Carolina killed a Spartanburg woman over the weekend. Investigators said that 23-year-old Alicia Thomas was injured when the rock crashed through the windshield of her car as it passed under U.S. Highway 74 Bypass near Rockingham on Sunday night. She died a short time later. Officials said that 16-year-old Cody Chavis, of Rockingham, and a 15-year-old threw the rock that killed Thomas. Chavis and the other teen, who was not identified because of his age, were each charged with first-degree murder. Chavis was being held in the Richmond County jail on \$400,000 bond. The other teen was being held at a juvenile detention facility.

April 7, 2010

Spartanburg police said a woman who was kidnapped by her husband after the fatal shooting of her mother on Tuesday has been found safe. Police also said they have located a vehicle driven by 37-year-old Kenneth Ray Moore, who is accused of fatally shooting his mother-in-law before kidnapping his wife. Police first responded to the parking lot of Carolina Vision Associates, located at 180 N. Dean St., at about 3 p.m. to a reported shooting. Upon arrival, officers found a woman lying in the front seat of a gray Dodge pickup truck. Capt. Randy Hardy, with Spartanburg Public Safety, said investigators believe Moore pulled into the parking lot in a black 1997 Ford Ranger, had an argument with his wife and began firing shots. Hardy said Moore got out of his car and walked up to the passenger side of the Dodge pickup, and told his wife to get out of the vehicle. When she refused, Hardy said Moore told his wife's mother that he was going to kill her. Hardy said Moore then took out a handgun and shot his mother-in-law twice. After the shooting, Moore's father-in-law ran into the business to get help, Hardy said. Hardy said Moore then told his wife he would shoot her as well if she didn't get out of the car. Moore's wife then got into the Ford Ranger and the two left. Police said Moore's wife was able to escape and was later found at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center after she was brought there by Moore's mother. Hardy said she sustained non-life threatening injuries. Hardy said deputies recovered the Ford Ranger near Beverly Drive, but Moore is still at large. Spartanburg Public Safety has charged Moore with murder, kidnapping, and possession of a weapon during a violent crime. Anyone with information about Moore's whereabouts was asked to call Spartanburg police.

April 7, 2010

Three Upstate volunteer firefighters have been charged with setting a mobile home on fire last month. Spartanburg County deputies told the Herald-Journal of Spartanburg that 21-year-old William Dustin Crisp and two 16-year-old men were arrested late Monday on second-degree arson charges. The men are members of the Cowpens Fire Department. Fire Chief Jamie Caggiano called investigators after putting out a suspicious fire at an abandoned mobile home on March 20. Caggiano said his firefighters told him they made a stupid, childish decision.

April 7, 2010

Greenville County deputies have charged four people in connection with the armed robbery of a check cashing business in late March, two of whom are employees of the business. Deputies said that at about 9:30 a.m. on March 29, an armed robbery was reported at the Check-N-Go at 1641 Woodruff Road by two of the store's employees. Investigators said that one of the employees told them that she was leaving for the bank to make a deposit when a man grabbed her and stole the deposit bag. The employee told investigators that the man then forced her back into the business, where he was joined by another man, who was armed with a gun. Deputies said that the employees said that the bandits tried to break into the safe, but the employees could not remember the combination. They said that one of the employees was then tied to a chair before the robbers ran away. Investigators said that they have determined that the employees conspired with the robbers to commit the crime. They said that one of the suspected robbers is a cousin of one of the employees and that the other is an acquaintance of the other employee. They said that the four shared the money taken during the robbery. Arrested were 39-year-old Jeffery Pearson, 22-year-old Carmen Griggs, 22-year-old Shatia Robinson and 24-year-old Keyon Robinson. Pearson was charged with armed robbery, possession of a weapon during a violent crime, conspiracy and kidnapping. Griggs, Shatia Robinson and Keyon Robinson were each charged with armed robbery and conspiracy.

April 8, 2010

A Gaffney woman has been accused of threatening the life of Cherokee County Sheriff Bill Blanton. The State Law Enforcement Division said Wednesday that 24-year-old Corvette Jeter was charged with threatening the life of a public official. SLED said that on Sunday an e-mail was sent to the FBI's tip line in Washington and was then forwarded to state authorities. They said that Jeter identified herself as another person and said that she was going to hang Blanton and hurt herself. If convicted, Jeter faces 30 days in jail and fines

April 8, 2010

Police said that they found more than 50 computers that belong to the University of South Carolina Upstate in a 27-year-old student's apartment. Campus police told the Herald-Journal of Spartanburg that they searched Dekel Strobles' home after an officer saw him disconnect a computer in a classroom on Tuesday and put it in his backpack. Investigators said that the serial numbers on the computers found in Strobles' apartment match computers reported missing from the school in the past year. University officials said that 65 computers, most of them desktops, and a projector have been stolen in the past eight months. The equipment is valued at \$63,000. Strobles was charged with possession of stolen property greater than \$50,000.

April 14, 2010

Authorities in Greenville said an Upstate mother was arrested this week after she was accused of child neglect. The Greenville County Sheriff's Office said 30-year-old Crystal Anders, of Greenville, is expected to be charged with five counts of unlawful neglect of a child. Deputies said several drug-related charges are also pending against her. Investigators said they went to Anders' home on Tuesday to assist a former occupant of the home who needed help from the sheriff's office to retrieve belongings he had left behind. Once officers arrived, they said they saw marijuana and drug paraphernalia in the living room. Investigators then obtained a search warrant to look around the home. During their search, deputies said they went to a second-floor bedroom where Anders' five sons stay. Deputies said the bedroom contained mattresses that were lying on the floor next to feces. In addition, deputies said the home has holes in the walls, a door propped up against a wall and a broken stair leading from the first floor to the second floor. Investigators also said firearms were kept in the home in a place that was easily accessible to the children. The children, ages 5 through 12, were not home at the time of the search, authorities said. They are now in the custody of the Department of Social Services. Anders is being held at the Greenville County Detention Center on \$111,000 bond.

April 15, 2010

A Laurens County school guidance counselor was suspended from work Thursday night after she turned herself in to police on drug charges. Marlene Stephens, 53, of Woodruff, was charged with two drug violations and was booked into the Spartanburg County Detention Center on Wednesday, FOX Carolina News reported. Investigators said Stephens, a guidance counselor at Laurens County District High School in District 55, was charged with unlawfully obtaining Hydrocodone and Zolipidem, both of which are controlled substances. The warrants had been part of an investigation with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. According to Dr. Billy Strickland, superintendent of Laurens District 55, Stephens has been

suspended by the district pending further investigation. "Marlene Stephens turned herself in to Spartanburg County Law Enforcement yesterday," Strickland said in a statement e-mailed to Fox Carolina News. "Mrs. Stephens is charged with unlawfully obtaining prescription drugs. In accordance with board policy, Mrs. Stephens has been suspended from employment with the district pending further investigation." Stephens has worked in Laurens District 55 for 22 years, officials said. Strickland said Stephens was suspended with pay following the arrest. She was not at school Thursday.

April 19, 2010

Cherokee County deputies made an arrest Friday and charged a man with three counts of murder in connection with a shooting in Cowpens that left his ex-girlfriend, her daughter, and her boyfriend dead. Cass Smith had earlier told FOX Carolina he had been questioned by deputies. On Friday, he was charged. Deputies took Smith into custody at his house, but a deputy said he had not yet been booked into jail as of late Monday night. Cass talked to FOX Carolina as he was being walked to a waiting car. He said that he was sorry and that he did not know that the teenager was at the home when the shooting happened. Cherokee County Sheriff Bill Blanton and Seventh Circuit Solicitor Trey Gowdy scheduled a Tuesday news conference to announce whether they'll seek the death penalty. Blanton didn't return a phone call seeking comment late Monday night. Cherokee County Coroner Dennis Fowler identified the three victims of a shooting in Cowpens on Sunday. Cherokee County deputies said two children who had been sleeping in the home and were unharmed discovered the bodies Saturday morning inside a mobile home off Emily Lane in Cowpens. Fowler identified the victims as 45-year-old Harold Benjamin Lick, of 402 Lime St., 41-year-old Suzanne Elizabeth Bridges and her 15-year-old daughter, Margaret Matilda Wenner. The mother and daughter lived in the home where the shooting occurred, Fowler said. After conducting autopsies on Sunday, Fowler said all three died from gunshot wounds on Friday night. Fowler did not release any other details. Neighbors told FOX Carolina that deputies have been at the home on several previous occasions.

April 22, 2010

Deputies said that an Upstate man tied a disabled woman up and sexually assaulted her several times last week. On Wednesday, 74-year-old Robert Sears was charged with first-degree criminal sexual assault and kidnapping. Deputies said that the assault happened at an apartment on Red Bird Lane in Landrum. Investigators said that Sears tied up a 58-year-old disabled woman with the cord of a heating pad and raped her numerous between April 14 and April 18. Deputies said that the woman was an acquaintance of Sears. Sears was being held at the Spartanburg County Detention Center on \$50,000 bond.

April 22, 2010

A student has been arrested on an Upstate college campus and accused of having two handguns in his [car](#). Lawson Boling, 24, of Taylors, is charged with two counts of carrying a weapon on school property. Police said that they found two guns in the trunk of Boling's car on Thursday at Greenville Technical College's Barshier Campus in Simpsonville. College Police Chief Bobby Welborn said that sheriff's deputies called to tell him about a call that a student who was upset about academics was headed to class. Welborn said that campus officers approached Boling and searched his car. The chief said that there is no indication Boling intended to use the guns. Officials briefly locked down the campus as a precaution during the search and investigation.

April 27, 2010

The man believed to be responsible for a fatal shooting in Duncan on Tuesday morning was arrested after a 3-hour standoff on Interstate 85 in North Carolina. Spartanburg County deputies said that warrants have been signed against 45-year-old Arthur Deval Mims, charging him with murder, assault and battery with intent to kill and arson. Deputies said that at about 3:20 a.m. officials received a phone call about a shooting at 823 Terrace Creek Drive. They said that responding deputies found Mim's 16-year-old stepdaughter, who had been shot and ran from the home to get help, at a neighbor's house. They said that the deputies then searched the home and noticed that smoke was coming from an upstairs bedroom. Investigators said that the deputies found Mim's wife, 36-year-old Dawn Katrice Mims, dead and called for firefighters to put out the blaze. Deputies said that they identified Mims as the gunman and that he had fled the scene in a white pickup truck before crews arrived at the scene. Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright said that Mims' truck was later spotted in Cherokee County on Interstate 85 and a chase ensued. They said that stop sticks were used to flatten at least one of the tires, forcing the vehicle to travel for quite some time on a rim. They said that the truck came to a stop in the middle of I-85 northbound near Lexington, N.C. Investigators in Davidson County, N.C., said that they were not sure if there was anyone else in the truck with Mims and so they decided to back off and allow Mims to surrender. That happened about three hours later. In the meantime, traffic on both

northbound and southbound I-85 was shut down between mile markers 89 and 91, backing traffic up for nearly 10 miles in either direction. Davidson County officials said that Mims was taken to a local hospital because it appeared that he had drank bleach. Wright said that Mims fired shots at officials at some point during the standoff. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest information on this developing story.

May 3, 2010

A Williamston man has been charged in connection with a string of sex crimes that police said span a decade. William Guthrie, 67, was arrested on Friday and faces two counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct with a minor, lewd act on a minor and incest. Capt. P.J. Brown, of the Williamston Police Department, said that the truck driver turned himself in to authorities after he found out he was being investigated. He said that Guthrie became the focus of the investigation after an alleged victim accused of him the sex crimes. Guthrie was released on \$56,000 bond.

May 4, 2010

A U.S. citizen who had recently returned from a five-month trip to his native Pakistan, where he had a wife, was arrested at a New York airport on charges that he drove a bomb-laden SUV meant to cause a fireball in Times Square, federal authorities said. Faisal Shahzad was on board a Dubai-bound flight at Kennedy Airport when FBI agents and New York Police Department detectives took him into custody late Monday, law enforcement officials said. One official said he claimed to have acted alone. U.S. authorities "will not rest until we have brought everyone responsible to justice," Attorney Eric Holder said early Tuesday, suggesting additional suspects are being sought. Shahzad, 30, is a naturalized U.S. citizen and had recently returned from a five-month trip to Pakistan, where he had a wife, according to law enforcement officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the investigation into the failed car bombing. Investigators hadn't established an immediate connection to the Pakistani Taliban -- which had claimed responsibility for the botched bombing in three videos -- or any foreign terrorist groups, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "He's claimed to have acted alone, but these are things that have to be investigated," the official said. Another law enforcement official said Shahzad was not known to the U.S. intelligence community before the failed bombing attempt. The U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan was handling the case and said Shahzad would appear in court Tuesday, but the charges were not made public. FBI agents searched the home at a known address for Shahzad in Bridgeport, Conn., early Tuesday, said agent Kimberly Mertz, who wouldn't answer questions about the search. Authorities removed filled plastic bags from the house overnight in a mixed-race, working-class neighborhood of multi-family homes in Connecticut's largest city. A bomb squad came and went without entering as local police and FBI agents gathered in the cordoned-off street. Shahzad was being held in New York overnight and couldn't be contacted. A phone number at a listed address for Shahzad in Shelton, Conn., wasn't in service. He used to live in a two-story grayish-brown Colonial with a sloping yard in a working-class neighborhood in Shelton. On Tuesday morning, the home looked as if it had been unoccupied for a while, with grass growing in the driveway and bags of garbage lying about. Neighbors offered diverging descriptions of Shahzad but agreed that he kept to himself. One, Brenda Thurman, said Shahzad had told her husband he worked on Wall Street, while another neighbor, Audrey Sokol, said she thought he worked in nearby Norwalk. Thurman, 37, said he lived in Shelton with his wife and two small children until last year. "He was a little bit strange," she said. "He didn't like to come out during the day." Sokol, a teacher who lives next door to Shahzad's old house, said that he would wave and say hello and that he seemed normal to her. Law enforcement officials say Shahzad bought the SUV, a 1993 Nissan Pathfinder, from a Connecticut man about three weeks ago and paid cash. The officials spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the case. The vehicle identification number had been removed from the Pathfinder's dashboard, but it was stamped on the engine, and investigators used it to find the owner of record, who told them he had sold the vehicle to a stranger. As the SUV buyer came into focus, investigators backed off other leads. The SUV was parked on Saturday night on a busy midtown Manhattan street near a theater showing "The Lion King." The explosive device inside it had cheap-looking alarm clocks connected to a 16-ounce can filled with fireworks, which were apparently intended to detonate gas cans and set propane tanks afire in a chain reaction "to cause mayhem, to create casualties," police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said. A metal rifle cabinet placed in the SUV's cargo area was packed with fertilizer, but NYPD bomb experts believe it was not a type volatile enough to explode like the ammonium nitrate grade fertilizer used in previous terrorist bombings. Police said the SUV bomb could have produced "a significant fireball" and sprayed shrapnel with enough force to kill pedestrians and knock out windows. A vendor alerted a police officer to the parked SUV, which was smoking. Times Square, clogged with tourists on a warm evening, was shut down for 10 hours. A bomb squad dismantled the explosive device, and no one was hurt. But Holder said Americans should remain vigilant. "It's clear," he said, "that the intent behind this terrorist act was to kill Americans." Authorities did not address Shahzad's plans in Dubai. The airport there is the Middle East's busiest and is a major transit point for passengers traveling between the West and much of Asia, particularly India and Pakistan. Dubai-based Emirates airline said three passengers were pulled from Flight

EK202, which was delayed for about seven hours. The airline did not identify Shahzad by name or identify the other two passengers. The aircraft and passengers were then re-screened before taking off Tuesday morning, and the airline is "cooperating with the local authorities," Emirates said in a statement e-mailed to the AP. In Pakistan, Interior Minister Rehman Malik told the AP that authorities had not been formally asked for help in the probe but would cooperate if asked. More than a dozen people with American citizenship or residency, like Shahzad, have been accused in the past two years of supporting or carrying out terrorism attempts on U.S. soil, cases that illustrate the threat of violent extremism from within the U.S. Among them are Army Maj. Nidal Hasan, a U.S.-born Army psychiatrist of Palestinian descent, charged with fatally shooting 13 people last year at Fort Hood, Texas; Najibullah Zazi, a Denver-area airport shuttle driver who pleaded guilty in February in a plot to bomb New York subways; and a Pennsylvania woman who authorities say became radicalized online as "Jihad Jane" and plotted to kill a Swedish artist whose work offended Muslims.

May 4, 2010

The South Carolina Department of Corrections said that an inmate walked away from his work assignment at the Pickens County landfill on Tuesday afternoon. Officials said that Christopher Daniels was sentenced to 15 years in prison after being convicted in Anderson County of third-degree arson in March 2009. Daniels is 6 feet 3 inches tall, 230 pounds and has brown hair. Anyone with information about Daniels' whereabouts was asked to call the State Law Enforcement Division at 803-737-9000.

May 4, 2010

Greenville County deputies said that two children and a teenager have been charged in connection with a bomb hoax in Travelers Rest on Tuesday afternoon. Investigators said that a woman who lives on Morrison Drive said that she found a package in her mailbox with a note indicating it would self-destruct in 10 minutes. They said once the bomb squad opened the box a balloon was found inside with a note that read, "Enjoy. Ha! Ha!" Deputies said that an 11-year-old girl and 12-year-old girl and 13-year-old girl have each been charged with possession or distribution of a hoax device of destruction. The children were not identified because of their age. The girls told investigators that they were trying to play a prank on the woman's 12-year-old son and had originally tried to put the package in the mailbox on Sunday.

May 10, 2010

Columbia's police chief said he has been fired, after more than two weeks of criticism for his investigation into a wreck involving the mayor-elect of South Carolina's capital city. Tandy Carter said Monday he'll challenge his termination by City Manager Steve Gantt. Carter has been investigating an early morning crash on April 21, hours after Steve Benjamin was elected as Columbia's first black mayor. Benjamin was not hurt. The other driver has been hospitalized for two weeks. Carter said he would stay on the case despite Benjamin's request that an outside agency be called to avoid any appearance of favoritism. Last week Carter did ask the Highway Patrol to review his agency's investigation. Gantt said that Col. Carl Burke has been appointed as interim chief.

May 10, 2010

Spartanburg County authorities were searching for an inmate who escaped near Cowpens on Monday morning. A source at the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office said that crews are searching for 31-year-old Jason Williams, of Clifton. Williams is the same man who was arrested after a chase and crash in March. He was charged in connection with two robberies that happened earlier. Authorities have set up a command post at a church at the intersection of Cemetery Road and Oak Street. Search dogs and a helicopter was being used in the search. A perimeter has been set up and vehicles entering and exiting it are being searched. According to a court clerk, Williams was at the Cowpens Municipal Building for a hearing on Monday morning. The clerk said that when his hearing ended, Williams darted out of the building and fled. Cowpens Town Administrator Fred Gossett said that Williams was wearing an orange jumpsuit and handcuffs when he fled. Two schools near the search area were not allowing outdoor activities during the manhunt. Deputies said that Williams should be considered dangerous and asked anyone with information on his whereabouts to call 888-CRIME-SC.

May 18, 2010

The teen charged in connection with the slaying of a Greenville County girl nearly two years ago is expected to be in court on Wednesday. The body of 8-year-old Dymia Woody was found in a vacant mobile home in July 2008 after her mother had

reported her missing the night before. The coroner's office has said that Woody died from asphyxiation because of a breathing obstruction, and that there were visible signs of sexual assault on her body. Investigators charged then 14-year-old Sam Young, who lived in the neighborhood, with murder, criminal sexual conduct and kidnapping in connection with Woody's death. They said the decision to arrest the boy was made based on DNA tests. In August 2009, a judge ruled that jurisdiction for the now 16-year-old Young be transferred to general sessions court instead of family court. Prosecutors said that the ruling means that Young will be tried as an adult rather than a juvenile, which he had been charged as until Friday. Marcia Barker, from the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office, said that Young will be in court to plead, but did not say to what he will plead. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest information on this story.

May 18, 2010

A doctor from Columbia is accused of writing prescriptions for a woman with whom he did not have a medical relationship. Spartanburg police said that they were alerted to the problem after a woman went to a pharmacy on April 24 to pick up her prescription. They said that the pharmacist told the woman that someone had already been in earlier in the day and picked up a prescription in her name for Xanax. The woman told the pharmacist that she did not believe any of her doctors prescribed the drug to her. Police said that during a joint investigation with the Department of Health and Environmental Control and the Bureau of Drug Control it was determined that Dr. John Dunlap wrote the prescription to the woman's daughter in her name. Dunlap was charged with seven counts of unlawful distribution of a schedule IV controlled substance. He was released from jail after posting bail. He said that he is innocent, but would not go into detail. "I'm not talking to you," Dunlap said when FOX Carolina tried to talk to him about the charges. "I'm not going to get into it." Meredith White, of Boiling Springs, was charged with conspiracy in connection with the case. She turned herself in to authorities at about 9 a.m. Tuesday. White told FOX Carolina that she has a drug problem and that she is the victim in all this. She said that Dunlap knew she was a recovering drug addict. "I know that there are other females that he does this for," White said. "I'm not the only one." White said she asked Dunlap for a prescription because she did not have the money, but that she was not a patient of his at the Spartanburg Mental Health Care Center, where Dunlap works.

May 19, 2010

A Simpsonville teen was arrested on Wednesday after a 15-year-old girl said he raped her last month. Greenville County deputies said that the sexual assault was reported on April 1 to Simpsonville police, when the suspect, who will not be identified because of his age, was 13 years old. Deputies said that during the initial investigation by police, it was discovered that the suspect was the son of a Simpsonville city employee. They said the case was then turned over to the Sheriff's Office to avoid a conflict of interest. Investigators from the county's sex crimes unit said that the suspect, now 14 years old, forced himself on the girl and had non-consensual sex with her. They said that the pair were acquaintances. The boy was charged with first-degree criminal sexual conduct. The case has been handed to the Solicitor's Office and Family Court for prosecution, deputies said.

May 28, 2010

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division said it is investigating a death threat made against South Carolina Attorney General Henry McMaster. Authorities said on May 18, someone placed a threatening note in the deposit drop box of Heritage Trust Federal Credit Union located at 8435 Dorchester Road in North Charleston. Investigators said the note contained a reference to "Jesuits." A security camera captured images of the individuals who used the drop box. SLED officials said the identities of those who used the box have been accounted for except one person. Anyone who has information regarding the person of interest, or anyone who has made any direct or implied threat regarding McMaster or any other South Carolina official, is urged to call SLED at 803-896-7133.

June 2, 2010

A western North Carolina teenager was charged after police said he used Facebook to threaten an attack on a high school. Police charged 19-year-old Robert Zipperer with making false threats on Tuesday. Investigators said that Zipperer said that Enka High School would be blown up and that he would shoot up the school in a posting on the social networking website. Zipperer was released on \$20,000 bond.

June 2, 2010

A man was arrested in connection with a homicide after a standoff at his home on Wednesday morning, Newberry County deputies said. Investigators said that a passerby found a body on Wednesday morning on U.S. Highway 176 near the intersection of Highway 773. They said that when deputies arrived, they determined that the person was killed in a way that did not result from a collision with an automobile. Deputies said they then followed a trail of evidence that led them to a mobile home at 37 Orchard Park Drive. They said that they found a truck parked at the home that was linked to the body that had been found. Investigators said that when deputies tried to make contact with 19-year-old Gregory Collins at the home, he ran to the back of the house and refused to come out. They said that special teams were called in and when negotiations with Collins failed, tear gas was fired into the home. Collins then surrendered to authorities. He did not have any weapons on him, deputies said, but he was wearing an empty pistol holster when he was arrested. Collins was charged with murder and other charges will be added, deputies said. They said he has no prior criminal record. The name of the victim was not immediately available.

June 6, 2010

After a year of investigation, Greenville County deputies took several people into custody Sunday after a busting a cockfighting ring in Cleveland, S.C. Officials said the raid took place on Hadeshill Road, off North River Road and Geer Highway, at about 10:30 a.m. Officials said they believe this is the largest cockfighting operation in the state, stating that hundreds of birds were killed each weekend in fights and that all fights were to the death. Prizes for the fights were as much as \$15,000. A FOX Carolina reporter at the scene saw deputies ticket and release dozens of people near the fighting pit, located in a steep, heavily wooded hillside. Officials with the U.S. Humane Society, Spartanburg County Humane Society, and Greenville County Animal Services responded to rescue hundreds of roosters. Greenville County officials said more information -- such as the amount of money seized, arrests and charges made and an exact number of chickens seized -- will be made available on Monday.

June 8, 2010

A woman was kidnapped and robbed at knife point on Tuesday afternoon, Greenville County deputies said. Jessica Mercer, 24, of Greenville, told investigators that a man jumped in the passenger side of her [car](#) while she was stopped at the intersection of Edwards and Ike roads about 2:45 p.m. Mercer told investigators that the man showed a knife and told her to drive him to Cherrydale. She said that when they arrived, the man forced her to hand over several items, including a diamond wedding ring, several credit cards, a cell phone and a GPS unit. She said that the man then jumped out of her car and ran away. Investigators said that Mercer drove to another location and called for help. The knife-wielding bandit was described as 6 feet tall and about 180 pounds with a dark complexion. He was wearing a black shirt, blue jeans and a red hat. Mercer was unharmed, deputies said. Anyone with information about the robbery and kidnapping was asked to call Greenville County Crime Stoppers at 23-CRIME.

June 11, 2010

A retired Seattle lawyer has been charged with sending a powder-laced letter to South Carolina Republican Sen. Jim DeMint. Blake Howe was charged with attempted destruction of government property. Federal prosecutors said that Howe mailed an envelope with baking soda, staples and paperclips to DeMint's office. Court documents unsealed Thursday said that Howe admitted to the mailing and did it because he was mad about the "propaganda" DeMint's office sent him and he wanted to sabotage DeMint's mail processing equipment. Howe was arrested Wednesday and released. He declined to comment to The Associated Press on Thursday.

June 14, 2010

Henderson County deputies said that a man kidnapped his daughter on Friday, in violation of a protection order. Deputies said that 20-month-old Catalina Serna was taken by 21-year-old Fabian Serna at about 12:30 p.m., while the girl was at her father's step-mother's house at 55 Old Dana Road. Investigators said that Fabian Serna is prohibited from contact with Catalina and her mother because of a domestic violence protective order. Fabian Serna was described as Hispanic, about 5 feet 7 inches tall, 165 pounds with black hair and brown eyes. Catalina Serna was described as a light-skinned Hispanic, 25 pounds with brown hair and brown eyes. Investigators said that Serna may be taking his daughter to Buncombe County, but may also have the

resources to take her to either Texas or Florida. Anyone with information on Serna's whereabouts was asked to call the Henderson County Sheriff's Office at 828-697-4911.

June 14, 2010

A cleanup crew discovered a body in the Sumter National Forest in Newberry County on Monday. Deputies said that the crew was cleaning up damage along David Branch Road from a storm on Sunday for a power company when they found the body. Investigators said that the death is being treated as suspicious until further details are developed. Deputies said they are trying to determine how the body got to where it was found. The body was not identified.

June 17, 2010

When deputies with the Laurens County Sheriff's Office go to a scene, they also make sure they are wearing their cop cameras. "It's actually a help," said Cpl. Paul Page. "I like it. Most of the other officers like it." Page is a patrol deputy and wears a cop cam every day. "We're an instant society, we're a video society," he said. He said it's turned on during traffic stops, assault cases and domestic violence cases. "We can do a video interview or they can make a video statement and then that can be entered into the record as evidence," Page said. After investigators use the cameras and capture the video, that video is then loaded into a computer and saved in a file. "Other agencies out west and some here are going to this, and this is something we believe is probably going to be the norm in a matter of a few years," said Laurens County Sheriff, Ricky Chastain. On Thursday, Chastain said 30 cameras were bought with federal grant money for \$125 each. He said the cop cams are also used to keep his officers in check. "It's also to make sure that our officers are responding appropriately and act appropriately," he said. When Cpl. Page gets behind the wheel, he's aware of what's going on and his other eye is ready too.

June 25, 2010

Deputies charged three more people Friday in connection with the fatal shooting of a man at a store in April. Dewayne Gregory Jr., 23; Derek Duncan, 21 and Avery Thomas, 23, were each charged with murder and armed robbery. The charges stem from the shooting death of Joshua Bryant at the Dollar General store at 5922 Augusta Road on April 27. Investigators said that about 4:15 p.m. that day, Bryant walked into the store after he saw a man wearing a bandanna over his face and carrying a gun walk into the store. Bryant's family said that his mother had walked into the store moments before the gunman walked in and that he went inside to check on her. Bryant confronted the gunman near the front door of the store and was shot and killed, deputies said. Tremain Davis was arrested the following day and charged with armed robbery and murder in connection with Bryant's death. Investigators said that Davis, along with Gregory, Duncan and Thomas, planned the robbery. They said that Gregory provided the gun, Duncan was driving the getaway car and Thomas acted as a look out inside the business during the crime. All four men were being held at the Greenville County Detention Center without bond. Anthony Dunlap, who was charged with accessory after the fact to murder in connection with the shooting, has been released on \$10,000 bond.

June 25, 2010

Greenville County deputies said that the one-time PTA president of Armstrong Elementary School stole more than \$14,000 from that organization during her tenure. Michelle Colantuono has been charged with breach of trust over \$5,000. Investigators said that she stole the money from July 2009 to April 2010. According to the incident report, Colantuono confessed to other board members that she pocketed the money. "It's shocking that kind of money gets missing that easily and there's no accountability for it," said Jason James, a parent of a 2nd grader at Armstrong Elementary. Colantuono was released from jail Tuesday on a \$15,000 personal recognizance bond.

June 26, 2010

Investigators said that two people are dead after a man shot a woman and then turned the gun on himself. The shooting happened at 200 Sleepy Hollow Road at midnight Sunday. The Anderson County Coroner's Office said that Kathy Valenburg was sitting at her kitchen table with a friend when her boyfriend came into the home and shot her. Investigators said that the Valenburg's friend was able to escape the home before the man shot and killed himself. The coroner's office said that the couple had a history of domestic violence. The man's identity was not immediately available.

Attachments



Education

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
SECOND QUARTER 2010**

Problem/Need: **EDUCATION**

DATE

TIME

PROGRAM

April 2, 2010

Elizabeth Bennett said that when she was a student, bullies would harass her at school. She said that for years she endured both physical and mental abuse. "Things like going down the hall and getting pushed," Bennett said. "I got this note in my locker. I opened it and it said 'Beth, I hate your guts. The anonymous hater.'" Bennett said that as she got older, she experienced depression and social anxiety, but she said that she learned to channel that energy in the push for the first anti-bullying law in South Carolina. She, along with her mother and state senators, wrote the bill. Experts said that bullying has migrated from the schoolyard to cyberspace. The problem of bullying via the Internet recently came to light after authorities said that 15-year-old Phoebe Prince hanged herself in her Massachusetts home. They said Prince's suicide was the result of bullying via the Web. "When I thought about Phoebe, I thought, not again," Bennett said. Bullying can now be found on social networking sites like Myspace and Facebook, said Dr. Roger Rhoades, a local psychotherapist. "A lot of what we're seeing now is heavy computer texting issues," Rhoades said. Rhoades said parents have to more involved in what their child is doing online. "A lot of times, that's not being monitored," Rhoades said. "They're not really watching. They're minimizing that and before you know it, it's too late." Rhoades said that parents should move computers to a central location in their home and teach children the importance of being kind. "You can get over being hit," Rhoades said. "You know bruises can heal. But that internal barrage on you, that internal onslaught to your heart and your mind is too much." Statistics show that more than 40 percent of kids have been victims of cyber-bullying. Bennett said that she is confident that the war on what she calls "peer abuse" will be won, beginning with the bill she helped write. As part of the anti-bullying law in South Carolina, which was created in June 2006, schools are required to have a policy on bullying. In that policy, the act of bullying must be defined and consequences for the action must be explained. If found guilty of bullying, punishment could range from youth arbitration to jail time.

April 4, 2010

Politicians and policymakers are lavishing unprecedented attention on community colleges, promoting them as engines to train workers in the recession and boost the country's college graduation rates. Where rhetoric meets reality on campus, you'll find people like Tania DeLeon, a student at Folsom Lake College in California who can't get into the classes she wants, must shuttle between two campuses 45 minutes apart and is spending spring break earning a paycheck so she can pay for gas and graduate on time. Grappling with soaring enrollment and plummeting state support, community colleges are grateful for the higher profile but disappointed money has yet to materialize to help them keep up with demand, let alone meet ambitious Obama administration goals to make the U.S. the global leader in college graduates again by 2020. "It's a difficult, challenging time for us," said George Boggs, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges. "But in the longer term view, we've never seen the image of community colleges as high as it is right now. Overall, I'm optimistic for the future." No longer the afterthought of higher education, the nation's 1,200 community, technical and junior colleges enroll more than 6 million students -- almost half the nation's college population. Public colleges' open-door policies and low fees draw many low-income, first-generation, immigrant and Hispanic students. The economic downturn has pressured both schools and their students, most of whom work long hours. Sinking tax revenues at state and local levels have forced public colleges to cut courses or schedule them around the clock, slash summer sessions, eliminate academic programs and even restrict enrollment. In Detroit, record demand prompted the Wayne County Community College District to cap student enrollment this spring for the first time in its 40-year history. Louisiana's community and technical colleges, facing a 4.5 percent state budget cut, have slashed 100 academic programs in the past year. A survey of 128 community college systems released last week found that 52 percent reported reductions in their operating budgets this year, a slight improvement over last year's grim numbers. But those facing cuts face steeper ones: the number of campuses with cuts exceeding 10 percent more than doubled. The crunch leaves little money for remedial education reform, counseling to better prepare students for college's challenges and other innovations to improve completion rates. Just 35 percent of community college entrants earn a certificate or an associate or bachelor's degree within six years, estimates say. "You put all these factors together, it's sort of a perfect storm," said Michael Kirst,

professor emeritus of education and business administration at Stanford University. "One would predict our graduation rates will decline, not increase, from the community colleges. We'll move backwards." Consider the challenges facing DeLeon, who like many community college students is trying to become the first in her family to graduate college. When she started at Folsom Lake College outside Sacramento in 2007, DeLeon had no problem finding courses. She finished school by mid-day and went to work. Then the budget crisis struck California. "Now I'm taking a class that ends at 10 o'clock at night," she said. DeLeon commuted between two different campuses in the Los Rios Community College system -- California's second largest - - to get courses she needs to finish in time. She persevered: DeLeon will graduate in May and transfer to California State University, Sacramento to pursue a career in juvenile justice. The picture is even bleaker for some schools that rely on local as well as state tax dollars. Montgomery College in Maryland, renowned for its engineering program, is facing a proposed 12 percent cut in county money and \$14.5 million less than it requested -- the cost of operating one of its three campuses. "Everyone talks about jobs, jobs, jobs," interim president Hercules Pinkney said. "Well, we're the ones training the work force. Hopefully that argument will win the day." The timing couldn't be worse coming off a record fall enrollment of 26,000, state budget cuts and proposed tuition increases. Nursing student Brenique Lewis devised a strategy for the class crunch: she waits until just before classes start and snatches up vacancies left by students who don't pay and get dropped. "I was lucky," said Lewis, 19, a recent immigrant from Jamaica who works part time at a car dealership. "If tuition increases, if there are more cuts, more people are going to drop out." Community colleges' latest lesson in economic and political realities came last week, when President Barack Obama signed legislation overhauling the federal student loan program. The law, a centerpiece of Obama's education agenda, strips banks of their role as middlemen in the loan business and puts the government in charge, saving an estimated \$61 million over 10 years. The House version approved last fall called for community colleges to receive \$10 billion to help fulfill the White House's American Graduation Initiative, providing an infusion of federal cash for job training, building projects and initiatives to get more students out the door with degrees or certificates. But because the projected savings from axing the bank subsidies were less than anticipated, community colleges instead will only get \$2 billion for job training alone. Most of the money from the overhaul will go to expand the maximum size of Pell grants for needy students, and additional money set aside for Hispanic-serving institutions also will benefit community colleges. Will Holcombe, chancellor of the Florida College System, echoed many of his colleagues by saying he's happy to come away with something but disappointed in the scaled-down vision. "Federal money and grant money, it seems, are about the only two vehicles we have for innovation these days," Holcombe said. "Our states are struggling to provide us with just the basic funding." Frank Chong, the U.S. Department of Education's deputy assistant secretary for community colleges, said the \$2 billion is "something of a down payment" on the graduation initiative. We need to use those funds to move the cause forward," said Chong, former president of Laney College, the flagship of California's Peralta Community College District. "We know our work is not done yet." Given the economic climate, community colleges' role in job development is rightly the top priority, said Jamie Merisotis, president of the Indianapolis-based Lumina Foundation for Education, one of several foundations that have invested heavily in community colleges and boosted their profile. Merisotis and others are pushing for accelerated programs to get students through community colleges faster, which would both improve graduation rates and ease space pressures. But, he said, that would require colleges to find money to realign curriculum and give stipends to students so they don't work so much. For now, community colleges are doing what they've always done -- more with less. One case in point is Northern Virginia Community College, the setting for Obama's student loan bill-signing ceremony. (The White House also used the opportunity to announce that Jill Biden, the vice president's wife and an instructor at the college, will convene a summit on community colleges this fall). The Virginia school has experienced a 23 percent cut in state funding and 24 percent enrollment growth in the past three years. Yet it has expanded online offerings to better combine e-learning with classroom instruction and used its world language program to attract international students who pay higher tuition. "A significant portion of higher education is hunkered down, trying to wait out the storm," said college president Robert Templin. "We've taken the approach that while things will get better, they will never get back to the way they were. We're going to have to find new ways to do our work."

April 5, 2010

73-year-old Rosetta Handy, and the second-graders who dote on her, it's a 50/50 proposition, with winners all around. "They help me as much as I help them," said Handy of her volunteer work as a tutor at Belmont Elementary School in a low-income West Baltimore neighborhood. "They give you energy. You learn psychology all over again." Recent research indicates that Handy knows of what she speaks -- documenting significant health benefits for the tutors. Handy, who worked many years for the Social Security Administration, is in her fifth year with the Experience Corps, a program operating in 22 cities nationwide that trains volunteers over 55 to tutor and mentor elementary school students. Roughly 2,000 volunteers currently work with about 20,000 students, but the Experience Corps -- buoyed by positive feedback and encouraging research -- hopes to double its scope within five years. The program's concepts have seemed promising ever since it was founded as a pilot project in 1995, but new academic studies have validated the optimism that it's a boon for the volunteers as well as the students. A two-year, \$2 million study completed in 2009 by researchers at Washington University in St. Louis, involving 881 second- and third-graders

in three cities, found that students with Experience Corps tutors made over 60 percent more progress with reading comprehension and sounding out new words than comparable students not in the program. Separate studies by Washington University and by Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore found that the tutoring led to measurable improvements for the volunteers -- compared to adults of similar age and demographics -- in physical activity and mental health. One small-scale study reported in the *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences* last year -- which included sophisticated neuroimaging of 17 study members over 60 -- including eight Experience Corps volunteers in Baltimore -- suggested that tutoring young children in reading and math could delay or even reverse brain aging. The lead researcher, professor Michelle Carlson of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, is launching a far larger, multiyear study to pursue these preliminary findings. The study focuses on the same population that makes up a majority of the tutors in Baltimore -- predominantly African-American women, with modest incomes and an above-average risk of various health problems. "Ideally, we'd like to see if this mentoring program reduces the risk for dementia and other costly diseases," said Carlson. "We'll be looking at whether we can recalibrate their rate of aging -- and show that people at the greatest health risk are the ones who can benefit most immediately." There has been extensive research in recent years suggesting that mental exercises such as crossword puzzles could help elderly people slow the deterioration of their brain. But Carlson said it's possible that tutoring children might be even more effective by integrating cognitive, physical and social activity. "How many crossword puzzles can you do before you get bored with them?" she asked. "This tutoring gets people engaged in doing what the brain is supposed to do -- the brain is a social organ." "The message to them is to take all their accumulated wisdom of a lifetime and give it back to help other people," Carlson said. "They get out of bed in the morning, even when they don't feel great, because they have a social contract with the kids at school. They know a child is waiting for them." Minnie Broady, a 62-year-old volunteer, doesn't need any research findings to know that the tutoring has rejuvenated her. A former teacher at Baltimore City Community College, she was sidelined by a heart attack and deeply depressed at what might lie ahead. Now, she feels better than she has in years -- mentally and physically. "This has saved my life -- I'm not going to lie to you," she said, her voice briefly breaking with emotion. "Some of the children are a challenge, but it has been a great help to me." She's no pushover -- some of the students call her 'sarge' and she preaches the need for self-respect and responsibility. "They need that," she said. "They feel that they can do whatever they want to do, and there are no repercussions." The Baltimore tutors generally work 15 hours a week, receiving an annual stipend of about \$2,800 that helps cover transportation costs, school lunches and occasional treats for the kids. At Belmont Elementary, where virtually all of the 300-plus students are black, Experience Corps has provided a team leader and 14 tutors -- one assigned to every kindergarten through third grade class, plus Broady who tutors fourth graders. In the classrooms, the tutors generally work with one or two students at a time, giving them extra practice on math or reading. If a child is acting up, the tutor can take him or her aside for a quiet discussion while the regular teacher proceeds uninterrupted with the other students. "You can imagine the difference having 15 extra mature adults around the school," said Sylvia McGill, director of Experience Corps' Baltimore operation. "The principals tell us it's more teachable, calmer environment, and a lot of young, first-year teachers say they wouldn't have made it without their volunteer." One of those rookie teachers, Jennifer Ries, was getting help from Elizabeth Dorsey -- a patient, soft-spoken tutor -- in a bright-colored classroom filled with 17 third-graders. "The kids love her," said Ries, 22. "They like having another adult around." Later, with neither teacher nor tutor in earshot, 8-year-old Kayla Smith confirmed that assessment about Dorsey. "She helps us with things," said Kayla. "We only have to raise our hand -- she'll come over and explain it to us. She's real nice." Dorsey, 67, retired five years ago after a career as a civil servant in nearby Howard County and was looking for something to do. She'd taught adult literature classes before, but when it came to engaging with children, "I always stayed away." And now -- after experiencing the Experience Corps? "I do like them," she said, sounding almost surprised. "It's amazing. Even the ones who you think you're not getting close to, all of a sudden one day they'll jump up and give you a hug." It's not always jovial. One of the day's lessons entailed discussion of which is more important -- family or money. "One boy asked me: 'Suppose your family is a mean family?'" Dorsey recounted. "I could tell he was talking about his own family. That was a little sad moment." Barbara Johnson, who tutors in a kindergarten class, observes children coming to school who -- in behavior and appearance -- appear to be neglected. "They need some mentoring, some TLC," said Johnson, 70, who moved to Baltimore after a career with the postal service in upstate New York. "It's the quality of the time that you give them -- the tone of voice," she said. "Children can tell when you really care." Another Belmont volunteer, Carolyn Scott-Harris, retired in 2008 after 28 years as a corrections officer at the Baltimore city jail. Even in some of the first-graders she tutors, she notices the impact of growing up in a tough environment. "All the girls are pretty sweet. ... but some of the boys are so out of line, so wild," said Scott-Harris, 64. "Most of them are very smart, all of them are a little street-wise, some are overly street-wise." Nationally, Experience Corps spends about \$23 million on its operations, according to its CEO, Lester Strong. It relies on a mix of funding sources -- including federal funds from AmeriCorps, private donations, and payments from the school districts it serves. In Baltimore, principals who want the tutors are asked to contribute \$20,000 from the own school budgets -- covering about a quarter of the program cost. Strong hopes the overall budget will grow so the program can multiply in size while maintaining high standards. "The program is a triple win -- for our tutors, for our children and for the schools," he said. "Everyone benefits."

April 6, 2010

Former Clemson men's head basketball coach Oliver Purnell said that rebuilding the basketball program at DePaul University was a great opportunity that he could not pass up. Purnell was introduced as the new men's basketball coach at the Chicago school to a crowd of supporters during a press conference on Tuesday afternoon. The former Clemson coach said that DePaul's basketball tradition was a great attraction for him. He said that the school belongs in the category of elite basketball programs and that it is very close to being very competitive. "This is something I love doing," Purnell said. Purnell also jokingly said that his wife's love of shopping helped him make the final decision. The Tigers were 138-90 in Purnell's seven seasons at Clemson. The team has been to the NCAA Tournament the past three years, but have been eliminated in the first round each time. "When he came to Clemson we had not been to a postseason tournament in four consecutive years," said Clemson Athletic Director Terry Don Phillips in a statement to the media. "Now we join National Champion Duke as the only ACC schools to play in the NCAA tournament each of the last three years." Before coming to Clemson, Purnell spent nine years at Dayton, three years at Old Dominion and three years at Radford. DePaul fired its men's head basketball coach Jerry Wainwright in the middle of the season. Clemson Athletic Director Terry Don Phillips will talk to the media at about 4:30 p.m. Purnell thanked both Phillips and Clemson University President Jim Barker for the opportunity to coach at Clemson.

April 8, 2010

Officials with Spartanburg County School District 7 announced on Wednesday that they are planning to close Whitlock Junior High School and Z.L. Madden Learning Center at the end of the school year. That announcement caused a bit of concern for some parents of students at the schools, including Vickie Watkins, whose son is a seventh grader at Whitlock. "The teachers are doing an excellent job with him," said Vickie Watkins, Jonathan's mother. "He's a straight-A student and has no problems. I need to find out and figure out which direction my child will be going in. That's very important." "It was just a real reality check," said Felicity Waters, a teacher with the district. Waters, along with other teachers, were briefed about the possible upcoming changes on Wednesday. "We were told that the students that were leaving Whitlock would go to either Carver or McCracken," Waters said. Waters said that as a teacher, she is concerned about students, the potential for overcrowded classrooms and job security. "Where will you be placed?" Waters asked. "It could be a good move, though, if it's for the achievement of the schools, achievement for the children's success. So, I'm optimistic that it will work out in the end." Watkins said that she will be visiting the school district office very soon to see how these plans could help her son continue his excellent education. "I hope wherever he goes, he's going to do better," Watkins said. "But, I really wish they would keep the school open." There are more than 280 students who attend Whitlock Junior High School and administrators said they are reviewing several proposals about where those students will go and how it could affect other schools. As for Z.L. Madden, a former elementary school, administrators said there will be minimum impact there since the facility is now used for only a few programs. Officials said that the district will save money because they will be getting rid of operational costs. The first community meeting to discuss proposals about placement for students will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday at Spartanburg High School.

April 12, 2010

A top federal official is coming to South Carolina to talk about improving meals for the state's school children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture said Food and Nutrition Service Administrator Julie Paradis is visiting with state officials in Charleston on Monday to discuss the Obama administration's priorities for improving school meals and the health of school children. Cutting down on childhood obesity is the focus of first lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign. The USDA said about one-third of children in America are either overweight or obese.

April 13, 2010

Clemson University has hired Brad Brownell to take over as the men's head basketball coach, the university plans to announce at a news conference Tuesday afternoon at Clemson. Brownell has been the head coach of the men's basketball team at Wright State University in Ohio since March 2006. Brownell takes the reins of the Clemson men's basketball team from Oliver Purnell, who announced last week that he is leaving Clemson to become head basketball coach at DePaul University in Chicago. In his first season at Wright State, he led his team to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1993. In his second season, he led Wright State to a 21-win season. Before coaching at Wright State, Brownell coached basketball at UNC Wilmington. He received a bachelor's degree from DePauw University and a master's degree at the University of Indianapolis.

April 13, 2010

Furman University on Tuesday announced Jackie Smith Carson as the new women's head basketball coach. For the past five seasons, Smith Carson has served as assistant coach at James Madison University. In addition, she spent the last two years as associate head coach and the last four years as recruiting coordinator. This is a homecoming of sorts for Smith Carson. She played basketball for Furman University and graduated there in 2000. Furman President Dr. David Shi said, "The hiring of Jackie Smith Carson represents a signal moment in the history of Furman basketball. As a former Paladin player now set to become our head coach, she is uniquely qualified to chart what I'm confident will be a very bright future for our women's basketball program. She was a superb student-athlete and promises to be an equally great coach." After her graduation from Furman, Smith Carson played professionally in Belgium and Israel before joining the coaching ranks at James Madison University.

April 16, 2010

High school students from North and South Carolina are getting together to show off their science smarts. About 120 students are participating in the Xtreme Technology Event on Friday at Benedict College in Columbia. The seventh annual event is sponsored by the [National Science Foundation](#). Students compete in teams of six in categories including biology, chemistry, engineering and mathematics. Students also get to tour Benedict's School of Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and get information about campus groups, including women in engineering and the National Organization of Black Chemists.

April 19, 2010

South Carolina teens who drop out of school or habitually skip their classes would lose their driving privileges until they're 18 under a bill being pushed by a freshman lawmaker. Rep. Tom Young called it a short-term solution to the long-term problem of too many students not graduating. He believes threatening to yank the rite of passage from truant youth would be a powerful incentive to keep them in school. The proposal would allow parents to appeal for an exception if the teen needs a license to get to work or to drive a sick family member to medical treatments. Education Department officials said the bill would improve the state's on-time graduation rate of 74 percent, but will add costs if students cannot drop out before they are 18 years old.

April 22, 2010

South Carolina teens would lose their driver's license until they are 18 if they drop out of school or miss too many days of class under a bill that lawmakers are fast-tracking. A House Education subcommittee unanimously approved the measure on Thursday. The House then agreed to let the bill skip the committee level and come directly to the floor for debate. Legislators are trying to move the bill to the Senate so it has a chance of passing this year. Rep. Tom Young said that threatening to yank the driving privileges would be a powerful incentive for students to stay in school. The Aiken Republican said that many of the state's problems stem from too many people lacking education. South Carolina's on-time graduation rate is 74 percent. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures at least 20 states have passed similar laws.

April 27, 2010

Random drug testing could be a new rule for district 5 schools in Spartanburg County if the school board approves a measure that would make the district the fourth to do so in the state. Board members said that the proposal would improve the health and safety of students in the district. They said that coaches and parents brought up the idea of random screenings that would be paid for by the athletic department. Under the measure, parents would have to sign a consent form allowing the random drug testing. If the testing is not allowed by the parents, then the student will not be allowed to play sports. If consent is given, the process will randomly select students by an identification number. "The bottom line with the policy is that, hopefully, it will give student athletics an out if they are around drugs," said Bobby Bentley, director of public relations and athletics for the district. "To say, I'm going to be drug tested and I'm not going to participate in drug activity." "There is always the opportunity of possibility of a lawsuit," said Allen Smith, the district's attorney. "Our courts have made it clear that this type of policy is a sound policy and legal policy." Under the proposal, the first positive test result will lead to a parent conference and the student must go through 12 weeks of counseling. The second offense will result in another parent conference and the student will be ineligible to play sports for 90 days, and must go through 12 weeks of counseling. The third or subsequent offenses will result in the student being ineligible to play sports for one year, and must go through counseling. Right now, the proposal will allow students to appeal his or her positive test within 48 hours. School officials said that they hope no student tests positive. They said they just want to encourage students to stay drug and alcohol free. The school board is expected to vote in a first reading on the proposal next month and then a second reading in June.

May 1, 2010

Nearly two dozen Upstate middle school students were led off a stalled charter bus moments before it caught fire on Interstate 85 in Gastonia Saturday morning. The bus was traveling north on I-85 near the U.S. 321 exit when a front driver's side tire blew out just after 8 a.m. According to the Gaston Gazette, 23 members of the Mauldin Middle School orchestra and six chaperones were on the bus bound for a performance at Carowinds. Officials said flames burned the interior of the bus and damaged musical instruments worth thousands of dollars, but no one was hurt.

May 3, 2010

The head of South Carolina's public schools said that districts could cut nearly 4,000 jobs before the upcoming school year. State schools Superintendent Jim Rex said Monday that district officials expect to eliminate between 2,100 and 3,800 jobs. Those include up to 2,500 teachers, leading to larger class sizes. Rex said that his numbers are based on a survey of the state's school districts. Local school boards are currently writing their budgets for the coming school year. District officials are basing their plans on the state budget, which the Senate approved last week. It reduces state spending on teacher pay and other education basics to 1995 levels. South Carolina has about 50,000 teachers. There are 1,400 fewer teachers this school year compared with last year.

May 18, 2010

Blue Ridge High School will soon require students driving to school to take a safe driving course. The move comes after two students at the school were recently killed in two different crashes. Troopers said that 17-year-old Michael Nyblom was riding in a pickup truck on Highway 101 last Monday when it hit a tree. He was killed in the crash. On March 22, 19-year-old Joshua Bryant was also killed in a crash when the car he was riding in hit several trees. Troopers have said he was not wearing a seat belt. The program, called Alive At 25, is a four-hour-long course that teaches students safe driving techniques and is taught by off-duty troopers, deputies and police officers. Most students and parents agreed that requiring the course is a proactive approach to keeping the roads safe. "I think it's a good idea just to give students a heads-up and have a future of less car wrecks," said Briana Gander, a Blue Ridge High School student. "It's definitely taken a toll on Blue Ridge with the past deaths of our fellow students." "I'm glad they are doing that program and I appreciate someone looking out, trying to do something to improve things with the kids," said Ron Johnson, a parent. The program costs \$35 and is already partnered with many schools in the area.

May 19, 2010

A western North Carolina student has been picked as a finalist in the nationwide Doodle 4 Google contest. The search-engine giant stopped by the Highlands School on Tuesday to showcase the talents of 16-year-old Bevan Schiffli. More than 30,000 students entered the contest, but only 40 were picked as finalists. The amateur artists had to design a Google logo using the theme, "If I could do anything, I would..." Schiffli's design, which she calls "Branch Out," features branches of trees that wind together to form the Google logo. The amateur artist said that she will take her dad to Google's awards ceremony in New York, where the winner of the contest will be announced. If Schiffli's design wins, she will get a \$15,000 college scholarship and her school will receive thousands of dollars to build a computer lab.

May 20, 2010

Girls' World workshop started with a pep talk on Wednesday afternoon, and some parents brought their daughters to sign up for the new program in Greenville. "We're losing a lot of teachers, a lot of programs," said Felicia Brown, one of the parents. "Girls' World will fill in where they can express themselves." Brown is a teacher and said she allowed her 12-year-old daughter to sign up because statewide education budget cuts and programs for the arts are being slashed. She said this will allow her daughter to be exposed to extracurricular activities. "They can do music, they can do dance, they can do modeling," Brown said. "They can do the things that they normally can't do at school." The facility is located near downtown Greenville. It features a music hall, a room for educational workshops and a kitchen area that will soon be a cafe sponsored by Liquid Highway, but run by girls participating in the program. "This is performing arts and entrepreneurship skills," said Michael Burton, the executive director of Girls' World. "We just want to give them an opportunity to expose those girls to those kind of career choices." Burton said that several girls in the community expressed a need for this type of program. "It's important because we talk about the peer pressure," Burton said. Shayla Virgil will not only attend activities, she'll also help mentor

younger girls. "Sometimes you get into certain situations and this could be one of the things to help," Virgil said. The program is free and it is paid for through private and public funds. It is designed to run during the school year and summer.

May 24, 2010

A South Carolina college that is the subject of a battle between a church and its board of trustees has named a new president. Erskine College announced on its Web site Friday that 34-year-old David A. Norman was chosen unanimously by trustees to be the college's 15th president. Norman is a former religion professor who has been working for a higher education consulting firm. He replaces Randall T. Ruble, who had previously announced his plans to retire June 30. The school of 600 students was founded in 1839 by the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Last year, the church tried to fire half the college's board and several trustees sued to block the move. The case is still in state court.

May 25, 2010

South Carolina is buying 85 used school buses from Kentucky, the second such purchase in five years. The state Education Department said Tuesday that it got the money for the buses by selling the skeletal remains of old buses to scrap metal companies. South Carolina is the only state that runs a school bus fleet. The Legislature approved a plan in 2007 to replace the fleet every 15 years. No money has been set aside to buy buses for two years. State Education Superintendent Jim Rex said that buying buses that average 18 years old is not ideal. They will allow the state to get buses off the road that are 26 or 27 years old and average 450,000 miles each. The average price for a bus at the auction this year is about \$3,800. South Carolina bought 73 Kentucky buses in 2005.

May 26, 2010

A South Carolina school district said that it will be able to relocate five schools that would be threatened if an earthquake struck the Charleston peninsula. The Post and Courier of Charleston reported that officials had said earlier this month they were unsure if they could make the move to new buildings by the start of the classes in August. The school district's Bill Lewis said Tuesday the move will be completed in time. The district decided earlier this month to move the five affected schools to other facilities in Mount Pleasant and North Charleston. Engineering reports showed the five schools' current buildings would threaten children's safety if a moderate earthquake struck. The school board said that students will be able to return to new buildings by the 2013-14 school year.

May 31, 2010

On Monday afternoon, it was announced that baseball teams from both Clemson University and the University of South Carolina will be among the 64-team field in this year's NCAA Division I Championships. Clemson (38-21) will begin by playing Southern Mississippi (35-22) in the Auburn Regional at Auburn University. USC will serve as a host site for the Columbia Regional. USC (43-15) will first take on Bucknell (25-33) at home. Four additional Carolina teams are slated to play in the 64-team field. Coastal Carolina (51-7) will host the Myrtle Beach Regional and play Stony Brook (29-25). College of Charleston (42-17) will face off against North Carolina State (38-22) in Myrtle Beach. University of North Carolina (36-20) will take on California (29-23) at the Norman Regional in Oklahoma. Regional play begins June 4 and will run through June 7 as necessary. There are 16 regionals in all, and the winners go on to play in the Super Regionals, which will begin on June 11. From there, the eight winners of the Super Regionals will play in the 2010 College World Series in Omaha, which starts on June 19.

June 2, 2010

By third grade, students should know how to write a complex sentence and add fractions, no matter if they live in Georgia or California. Eighth-graders should understand the Pythagorean theorem. And by high school graduation, all U.S. students should be ready for college or a career. That's the goal of sweeping new education benchmarks released Wednesday called the Common Core State Standards, a project that aims to replace a hodgepodge of educational goals varying wildly from state to state with a uniform set of expectations for students. It's the first time states have joined together to establish what students should know by the time they graduate high school. "With these standards, we can provide all of the country's children with the education they deserve," said West Virginia schools superintendent Steve Paine, who gathered with other educators and officials from across the country at Peachtree Ridge High School in Suwanee just outside Atlanta to release the final draft of

the standards. "Having consistent standards across the states means all of our children are going to be prepared for college and career, regardless of zip code." States are expected to use the standards to revise their curriculum and tests to make learning more uniform across the country, eliminating inequities in education not only between states but also among districts. The standards also will ensure students transferring to a school district in a different state won't be far behind their classmates or have to repeat classes because they are more advanced. Under Common Core, third-graders should understand subject-verb agreement, fifth-graders need to know about metaphors and similes and seventh-graders must understand how to calculate surface area. States that sign up are supposed to use the standards as a base on which to build their curricula and testing, but they can make their benchmarks tougher than Common Core. All but two states -- Alaska and Texas -- signed on to the original concept of Common Core more than a year ago. Critics worry that the standards will basically nationalize public schools rather than letting states decide what is best for their students. Texas' commissioner of education, Robert Scott, has said that the state didn't sign on to Common Core because it wants to preserve its "sovereign authority to determine what is appropriate for Texas children to learn in its public schools." So far, the standards have been adopted by Kentucky, Hawaii, Maryland, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Another 40 states and Washington, D.C., have agreed to adopt the standards in coming months, said Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, which joined with the National Governors Association in leading the Common Core project. "We don't think it's acceptable that because a student lives down in Atlanta and not up here, they should have different outcomes," said Wilhoit before Wednesday's event in the northern Atlanta suburbs. The federal government was not involved but has encouraged the project, including adoption of the standards as part of the scoring in the U.S. Department of Education's "Race to the Top" grant competition. President Barack Obama has said he wants to make money from Title I -- the federal government's biggest school aid program -- contingent on adoption of college- and career-ready reading and math standards. "As the nation seeks to maintain our international competitiveness, ensure all students regardless of background have access to a high quality education and prepare all students for college, work and citizenship, these standards are an important foundation for our collective work," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said Wednesday in a prepared statement. Common Core was structured over a year of meetings with teachers, parents, school administrators, civil rights leaders, education policymakers, business leaders and others from across the country. The group produced multiple drafts and collected comments from more than 10,000 people online. "The world is small now, and we're not just competing with students in our county or across the state. We are competing with the world," said Robert Kosicki, who graduated from a Georgia high school this year after transferring from Connecticut and having to repeat classes because the curriculum was so different. "This is a move away from the time when a student can be punished for the location of his home or the depth of his father's pockets."

June 16, 2010

The University of South Carolina may increase its freshman class by as many as 500 students this fall, as the school struggles with budget cuts. The State newspaper reported Wednesday that school officials think the fall freshman class could be as large as 4,400 students. Last fall's freshman class totaled about 3,900 students, a record. Adding as many as 500 more students could bring USC an extra \$3 million or more. School President Harris Pastides told the newspaper that USC has had about \$103 million cut from its state funding in the past two years, a cumulative reduction of 46 percent. He said that federal stimulus money has not made up the difference. School officials said that boosting the freshman class will make USC more accessible to South Carolina students.

June 24, 2010

Clemson University's board of trustees have approved plans under which incoming students will pay a tuition increase that averages 6 percent. The board on Thursday approved a 7.5 percent tuition increase for South Carolina residents and an 8 percent increase for out-of-state students. Trustees also raised room and board fees an average of nearly 4 percent. Clemson said its permanent base state appropriation has been slashed by about \$75 million since June 2008. The school said the extra cash will help offset anticipated state funding cuts of more than \$27 million. Clemson President Jim Barker said the school can also revive a construction project halted in 2008 due to state funding cuts.

June 26, 2010

Christian Walker homered and singled in the go-ahead run in the seventh inning, and South Carolina staved off elimination a fourth straight time Saturday night to beat rival Clemson 4-3 and advance to the College World Series finals. The Gamecocks (52-16) will play UCLA in the best-of-three championship round starting Monday. Clemson, the only team to make it to Omaha that wasn't a No. 1 regional seed, finished 45-25. Walker broke a 2-2 tie after Clemson intentionally walked Jackie Bradley. Walker sent Alex Frederick's 3-1 pitch up the middle, scoring Evan Marzilli from third base. Adrian Morales followed with a single through the right side to put South Carolina up 4-2. Gamecocks reliever Matt Price (4-1) allowed one run in 2 1-3 innings. Clemson's Casey Harman (8-4) took the loss.

June 30, 2010

The South Carolina Gamecocks won their first-ever College World Series on Tuesday night. Whit Merrifield's run-scoring single in the bottom of the 11th gave South Carolina a 2-1 victory over UCLA to sweep the best-of-three College World Series final. After losing their opener against Oklahoma, the Gamecocks won six straight games, including a sweep of the Bruins in the final. South Carolina fans barely waited for Merrifield's game-winning single to hit the ground before celebrating their school's first baseball national championship. The crowd at Jillian's bar burst into cries of "Gamecocks" as second baseman Scott Wingo raced in from third. Fans filled area bars and restaurants to watch the game in which South Carolina rallied for a tying run in the eighth inning. A celebration of the team's victory is scheduled for Wednesday at Colonial Life Arena in Columbia. Gates will open at 3:30 p.m. with the festivities beginning at 4:45 p.m. The events will include a replay of Tuesday night's game on the video screen and an autograph session with the team. Watch for coverage of the festivities on FOX Carolina News at 6:30 p.m.

Attachments



Environment

**PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
SECOND QUARTER 2010**

Problem/Need: **ENVIRONMENT**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
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April 5, 2010

Officials are working to extinguish the last of piles of smoldering trash after a fire at a Union County landfill on Monday morning. Director of Union County Emergency Services Robert Garner said that workers at the landfill found an area of burning trash while they were dumping a load of garbage at the MSW Landfill on Wildcat Road. Garner said that firefighters from several area departments were able to extinguish the initial blaze. He said that landfill workers are using equipment to move around the affected area of garbage so that firefighters can wet it down. He said that the remainder of the smoldering trash is being covered with dirt in an effort to put out the hot spots. The Department of Health and Environmental Control is at the scene monitoring the situation, Garner said. He said that health officials believe there is no threat to air quality or the surrounding area. Garner said he is hopeful that the remaining fire will be put out by early afternoon. Republic Services, Inc. owns the landfill

April 5, 2010

A backhoe hit a natural gas line in Greenville on Monday morning, prompting evacuations. The leak happened at a construction site at 68 Point Circle at about 9 a.m. That is located behind the Hilton hotel off Haywood Road. Firefighters said that people were evacuated from office buildings near the construction site as a precaution. Piedmont Natural Gas crews were at the scene, trying to repair the breach. Firefighters also shut down Point Circle to traffic. No injuries were reported.

April 9, 2010

Firefighters believe that a lightning bolt may have struck a natural gas line at a monitoring station in Columbus on Thursday night. A call came in to emergency workers at about 6:30 p.m. about an explosion, fire and strong odor of gas in the Mill Spring area of Polk County. Firefighters said that they evacuated the Cooper Riis facility, which is an assisted living center for those suffering from mental illness. The residents were housed temporarily at Polk County Middle School. Emergency workers also issued a voluntary evacuation for other areas. "We are checking gas levels inside people's homes to make sure everything is alright," said Mill Spring Fire Chief Trent Carswell. "We've never had to fight a fire quite like this one." Firefighters worked for hours battling the blaze that resulted from the explosion to get to the controls to shut off the gas line. Crews eventually had to divert the gas to another line so they could reach the controls. Officials said that the line provides service to those who live in Polk County as well as the Asheville area. Some residents were allowed to return to their homes on Friday morning. No one was injured in the explosion or fire.

April 9, 2010

Authorities plan to investigate whether a tornado damaged 15 homes in Anderson County as a line of severe storms swept across South Carolina on Thursday. The National Weather Service said five of the homes suffered major damage and numerous trees were knocked down a few miles north of Anderson around 5:30 p.m. Less than 15 minutes earlier, authorities said that a storm knocked down trees and took the siding off a house in southern Oconee County. Forecasters will survey the damage from both storms to determine if it was caused by a tornado. The severe storms moved across the state, and the weather service said that a possible tornado struck near Bluffton in Beaufort County at about 11:15 p.m., knocking down trees and cutting power

April 15, 2010

The eruption of a volcano in the tiny, isolated island nation of Iceland is threatening to turn into a major headache for businesses across Europe and around the world as a spreading ash cloud closes more European airports. Airlines are already counting the cost of grounded planes, and there are growing fears about the transportation of food supplies and other essential goods should the flight disruptions persist for several days -- or longer. But there were also some early winners from the unprecedented situation, with rail, bus and ferry tour operators all quick to lay on extra services for stranded business and leisure travelers as hotel rooms filled up. Airline shares took a hit as the Geneva-based International Air Transport Association estimated that the disruption is costing the industry some \$200 million a day in revenues. IATA added its forecast was "conservative" and costs will mount further as carriers reroute aircraft and care for stranded passengers. Eurocontrol, the European air traffic agency, said some 16,000 flights were canceled on Friday, more than half the 28,000 that usually operate. Delays and cancellations will continue on Saturday as the ash cloud from the eruption of the volcano beneath Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull glacier moves south and east. The flight ban was imposed because of concerns about pilot visibility and jet engine failure from the ash. Ryanair Holdings PLC, the leading low-cost airline in Europe, said it was extending the cancellations across most of its network through to at least lunchtime on Monday to give passengers clarity about the situation and a chance to rebook flights. "This spreading cloud of volcanic ash is an unprecedented event in Ryanair's 26 year history, and we are continuing to work around the clock to minimize its effects on our schedules," said Ryanair Chief Executive Michael O'Leary. Ashley Steel, global chairman for transport and infrastructure at professional services company KPMG, said that the biggest losses would come from trans-Atlantic business traffic, with the impact on economy class revenues muted by the fact that people would likely change their bookings to a later date. "This is yet another dramatic and costly event for the global aviation industry which will have a significant impact on annual revenues," Steel said, adding that the development reinforced the case for consolidation of the international airline sector. "Truly global airlines will be much better placed to deal with the financial fallout from these types of events," he said. British Airways shares dropped 1.1 percent, German flag carrier Lufthansa lost 2.1 percent and Air France-KLM slipped 1.7 percent. There were few early reports of major impacts on exports and imports, but analysts stressed that the stakes would rise each day of the flight ban. "Some businesses will be affected by the inability for freight to get in and out of the country," said Howard Archer, chief economist at IHS Global Insight in London. "As long as the disruption is not too long, this should not be a major problem. The main problem will be for goods that are perishable." The pharmaceutical industry is particularly reliant on air freight because of the high value and low weight of their products. The Italian farmer's association said that it may become an issue to import out of season goods from other areas, even though Italian airports are still open as shipments often come via other major European cities. Chiara Coffele, export manager of the family Coffele winery in Soave, Italy, was unsure whether she would make a wine festival and other business appointments in Norway in the coming days after her flight from Milan was canceled on Thursday. Coffele travels two or three times a year to Norway, where the family sells 15 percent of the 510,000 bottles of wine it produces annually. The three-day Stavanger wine festival is usually a key network event. While others are missing some holiday time because of the flight cancellations, "I get a little less work," Coffele said. A spokesman for the flower market in Berlin, which sells flowers that have been imported from all over the world, said there had not been any problems with the delivery on Friday morning and he was not aware of logistical problems for Saturday's flower trade. Several sushi restaurants said they get fresh fish on Thursday and had no deliveries until Monday. As Europe's airports emptied, travelers instead crowded train stations, bus depots and rental car offices. The high-speed Eurostar rail service linking Britain and continental Europe reported thousands of new bookings for the next few days. National railway operator Deutsche Bahn said it deployed all available trains and asked personnel to work extra shifts on the weekend. Nonetheless, it warned of overcrowded trains and long lines at booking counters. Norway's NSB railway company put extra trains on routes from Oslo to major Norwegian cities and the Swedish capital, Stockholm. Germany's Sixt car rental reported long lines at German branches. "There's a rush on our rental offices," said spokesman Frank Elsner. "We're trying to mobilize everything we can and try to offer an additional 2,000 cars across Europe in cooperation with our partners to make sure travelers can get back home on the weekend." In Britain, Network Rail canceled the bulk of engineering work that was planned for the next few days and also added extra services. At the Jumbo Hostel -- a Boeing 747 remodeled into a 27-room hotel just outside the Arlanda airport in Stockholm -- rooms were filling up fast. "I think we'll be full tonight," said manager Oscar Dios. "It's this sort of thing that we're here for. There is no place to go at the airport."

April 19, 2010

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency disputes claims that new federal climate rules will hamstring South Carolina's small businesses. The State newspaper in Columbia reported Monday that EPA chief Lisa P. Jackson said it's not true that the nation's first greenhouse gas regulations on large industries would apply to South Carolina businesses like restaurants and apartment complexes. Jackson was in Columbia to address an environmental justice conference. She was responding to criticism from leaders from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and state Attorney General Henry McMaster. McMaster has joined eight other states in legal action that could stop the new rules he said will cost the state jobs.

April 20, 2010

Applause, cheers and whoops of joy rang out at airports around the world Tuesday as airplanes gradually took to the skies after five days of being grounded by a volcanic ash cloud that has devastated European travel. But weary passengers might have to temper their enthusiasm. Only limited flights were allowed to resume at some European airports and U.K. authorities said London airports -- a major hub for thousands of daily flights worldwide -- would remain closed for at least another day due to new danger from the invisible ash cloud. And with over 95,000 flights canceled in the last week alone, airlines face the enormous task of working through the backlog to get passengers where they want to go -- a challenge that certainly will take days. Still, in airport hubs that have been cauldrons of anxiety, anger and sleep deprivation, Tuesday marked a day of collective relief. The boards at Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport announcing long-distance flights -- which had been streaked with red "canceled" signs for five days -- filled up with white "on time" signs Tuesday and the first commercial flight out since Thursday left for New York's John F. Kennedy Airport. "We were in the hotel having breakfast, and we heard an aircraft take off. Everybody got up and applauded," said Bob Basso of San Diego, who has been staying in a hotel near Charles de Gaulle since his flight Friday was canceled. "There's hope," he said. Basso, 81, and his son have tickets for a flight to Los Angeles later Tuesday. At New York's JFK, the first flight from Amsterdam in days arrived Monday night. "Everyone was screaming in the airplane from happiness," said passenger Savvas Toumarides, of Cyprus, who missed his sister's New York wedding after getting stranded in Amsterdam last Thursday. He said the worst part was "waiting and waiting and not knowing." The Eurocontrol air traffic agency in Brussels said it expects 55 to 60 percent of flights over Europe to go ahead Tuesday, a marked improvement over the last few days. By midmorning, 10,000 of Europe's 27,500 daily flights were scheduled to go. "The situation today is much improved," said Brian Flynn, deputy head of operations at the Brussels-based agency. "The outlook is that bit by bit, normal flights will be resumed in coming days." The agency predicted close to normal takeoffs by Friday. Still, an international pilots group warned that ash remains a danger and meteorologists say Iceland's still-erupting volcano isn't ready to rest yet, promising more choked airspace and flight delays to come. Ash that had drifted over the North Sea from the volcano in southern Iceland was being pushed back over Britain on Tuesday by shifty north winds, Icelandic scientists said. "It's a matter of wind directions. The volcano's plume is quite low actually, still below 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) near the volcano," said Gudrun Nina Petersen, meteorologist at the Icelandic Met Office. A Eurocontrol map showing the ash cloud on Tuesday listed the airspace between Iceland and Britain and Ireland as a no-fly zone, along with much of the Baltic Sea and surrounding area. The ash cloud also spread westward from Iceland, toward Greenland and Canada's eastern coastline. The volcano in southern Iceland is still spewing smoke and lava, but the ash plume is lower than it previously was, posing less threat to high-flying aircraft. In Denmark, civil aviation authorities postponed a test flight Tuesday with a propeller-driven ATR 72 to gauge ash concentration, for safety reasons. There is no consensus among on how much ash is too dangerous and even quantities of ash too small to be seen by satellite can be dangerous for aircraft, scientists fear. Jonathan Astill, head of airspace management at Britain's National Air Traffic Service, told the BBC that London airports would likely remain closed through Wednesday. Flights resumed in Scotland, but only for a handful of domestic flights. Switzerland reopened its airspace and Germany -- which hosts Europe's No. 3 airport at Frankfurt -- was to reopen starting Tuesday afternoon. Some flights resumed early Tuesday from Asia to southern Europe, and flights began flowing to Europe

from Cairo, where at least 17,000 people were stranded. Airports in central Europe and Scandinavia have reopened, and most of southern Europe remained clear, with Spain volunteering to be an emergency hub for overseas travelers trying to get home. Spain piled on extra buses, trains and ferries to handle an expected rush of passengers. Britain sent navy ships to Spain and France to fetch 800 troops coming home from Afghanistan and passengers who had been stranded by the chaos. The trip on the HMS Albion, a 570-foot (173-meter-long) amphibious assault ship, will take 40 hours from Santander in northern Spain to Portsmouth, England. One of the 290 civilians, Patricia Quirke of Manchester, said she and nine other families drove all night to catch the Royal Navy ride. Still, an enormous backlog of stranded passengers remained. Hopeful hitchhikers took to European roads and the technology-savvy headed to Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites to find rides home across the continent. Ferries on the continent have been so packed that the Viking passenger line between Finland and Sweden opened up its conference rooms so passengers could sleep on the floor. "No one's complaining," said ferry official Thomas von Hellens. "They are just happy to get across." Many Asian airports and airlines remained cautious, and most flights to and from Europe remained canceled. Patrizia Zotti, from Lecce, Italy, carried her 6-month-old son on her back as she waited to finally board a flight out of Tokyo on Tuesday. While happy about getting airborne at last, she was concerned about the ash. "I've read that the exploratory flights were safe, but I'm still a bit worried," she said. Australia's Qantas canceled its Wednesday and Thursday flights from Asia to Frankfurt and London, as well as return flights to Asia, saying the situation was too uncertain to resume flights into Europe. Not everyone who wanted to could get on a flight Tuesday. Phil Livingstone, a university student from St. Helens, England spent three nights sleeping on chairs at Seoul's Incheon International Airport and living off noodles and the one meal a day authorities provided. "Hope is high at the minute just because it's the only thing we've got," he said. Some stranded passengers stuck stickers reading "Lost in Transit" to their chests. Europe's aviation industry -- facing losses of more than \$1 billion -- has sharply criticized government handling of the disruption that grounded thousands of flights to and from the continent. But the international pilots' federation said Tuesday that a return to flight operations in Europe will be possible only if the final decisions are left to the pilots themselves, and are based on safety concerns rather than economics. Gideon Ewers, spokesman of the London-based pilots group, says historical evidence of the effects of volcanic ash demonstrates that it presents a very real threat to flight safety. Ash and grit from volcanic eruptions can sabotage a plane in many ways, stalling engines, blocking fuel nozzles, and plugging the tubes that sense airspeed. Truck driver Mike Kelly, 62, and his wife Wendy, 60, of Somerset, England, decided to wait out the ash in Sydney, where their son lives, after being stuck at Singapore's Changi International Airport for five nights. "We're heading back to Sydney today. We heard there might be another volcano explosion so we'd prefer to wait it out on a beach in Sydney," he said.

April 26, 2010

Gov. Mark Sanford said that strong storms that passed through northeastern South Carolina caused heavy damage in some spots, but may not have caused enough overall damage to qualify the area for federal disaster assistance. Sanford spoke to reporters on Monday outside Darlington County's emergency center before he surveyed the storm damage in a helicopter. Two Darlington County schools and several homes were significantly damaged by Sunday night's storms that also knocked out power to about 1,700 customers. Three people suffered minor injuries. The Red Cross opened one shelter Sunday night, but no one came. The National Weather Service said it is trying to determine if the damage was caused by a tornado, as spotters reported.

May 5, 2010

Ryan Branyon didn't see the tornado that destroyed his shed, but he could follow the path of destruction it left behind Monday morning. "It came from this direction and headed well, you can see where it headed straight through there," Branyon said as he pointed to scattered debris. Branyon was out of town when his neighbor called him and told him to rush home. "We got here and this is what we run into. The camper and all went through my shop, um, my truck got tore up. I've got tons of stuff in my shed still missing," he said. A tornado tore through the area, snapped trees and tossed boats around like toys. It even ripped off part of the roof of his home. The twister

also destroyed his son's playhouse. "It didn't have a door or windows," said Jeffery Branyon, Ryan Branyon's son. "It's broken." The force of the twister trashed the area, but didn't break Jeffery Branyon's spirit as he held a picture of what his playhouse used to look like. "My dad can build another one," he said. That's what many who live in Abbeville County said they will have to do; clean up and fix what they can. "I heard it, it sounded like a freight train," said Billy Kay, an 85-year-old man who lives in the area. He said he heard the tornado, but the storm whipped by within 30 secs. "It hit and was gone, over before I got to that closet," Kay said. He said there's some damage to his roof and the pecan trees around him are uprooted. Despite, the damage, he said he's just relieved that no one was hurt. The man upstairs was looking after me," he said.

May 3, 2010

The National Weather Service said that a weak tornado touched down north of Abbeville on Monday morning. The weather service said that the twister had winds of 75 to 80 mph, which puts it in the EF0 range on the Enhanced Fujita Scale, and was on the ground about 0.8 miles. Meteorologists said that the tornado touched down about five miles north of Abbeville on the south side of Kay Road, which it eventually crossed. The tornado uprooted trees, pushed a camper into a storage building, damaged roofs and blew out a couple of windows. A shed was also overturned. No one was injured during the storm.

May 4, 2010

Rescuers feared even more bodies would emerge as muddy flood waters ebb from torrential weekend rains that swamped Nashville, much of Tennessee and two neighboring states, leaving at least 29 dead. The Cumberland River that has submerged parts of Nashville's historic downtown was expected to start receding Tuesday after being swollen by flash floods in creeks that feed into it. Residents and authorities know they'll find widespread property damage in inundated areas, but dread even more devastating discoveries. "Those in houses that have been flooded and some of those more remote areas, do we suspect we will find more people? Probably so," Nashville Fire Chief Kim Lawson said. "We certainly hope that it's not a large number." Businesses along Nashville's riverfront lost electricity early Tuesday. Laurie Parker, a spokeswoman for Nashville Electric Service, said a main circuit failed before dawn, knocking out power to many downtown businesses, including the 33-story AT&T Building and a Hilton hotel. The flooding also prompted election officials to delay the city's local primary, which had been set for Tuesday. Restaurant and bars clustered on a downtown street remained closed because of the power outage. Bar manager Susan Zoesch said the closure would be hardest on servers who rely on tips. "We're trying to figure out what we can do for them if we're going to be shut down for a while," Zoesch said. Andy Mason, the concierge at a high-rise building of condominiums, said he was been advising residents to leave the 330-unit building because power wasn't expected to be restored for three days. Thousands of people fled rising water and hundreds were rescued, but bodies were recovered Monday from homes, a yard, even a wooded area outside a Nashville supermarket. By Monday night, the rapidly rising waters were blamed in the deaths of 18 people in Tennessee alone, including 10 in Nashville. The weekend storms also killed six people in Mississippi and four in Kentucky, including one man whose truck ran off the road and into a flooded creek. One person was killed by a tornado in western Tennessee. In Nashville, the Cumberland also deluged some of the city's most important revenue sources: the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, whose 1,500 guests were whisked to a shelter; the adjacent Opry Mills Mall; even the Grand Ole Opry House, considered by many to be the heart of country music. Floodwaters also edged into areas of downtown, damaging the Country Music Hall of Fame, LP Field where the Tennessee Titans play and the Bridgestone Arena, home to the NHL's Nashville Predators and one of the city's main concert venues. Carly Horvat, 29, lives in a downtown condo and ventured out with a few friends to look at damage Monday night. "I have never heard the city so quiet," Horvat said. "Usually, you hear whooping and hollering from Broadway." Damage estimates range into the tens of millions of dollars. Gov. Phil Bredesen declared 52 of Tennessee's 95 counties disaster areas after finishing an aerial tour from Nashville to western Tennessee during which he saw flooding so extensive that treetops looked like islands. The severity of the storms caught everyone off guard. More than 13.5 inches of rainfall were recorded Saturday and Sunday, according to the National Weather Service, making for a new two-day record that doubled the previous mark. Dramatic rescues

continued into Monday as water crept into areas that had remained safe during weekend downpours. Authorities and volunteers in fishing boats, an amphibious tour bus and a canoe scooped up about 500 trapped vacationers at the Wyndham Resort along the river near Opryland. Rescuers had to steer through a maze of underwater hazards, including submerged cars, some with tops barely visible above floodwaters the color of milk chocolate. Bill Crousser was riding his Jet Ski past a neighbor's house when he rescued a man, his wife and their dog moments before flames from a fire in the garage broke through the roof. "We just got the hell out of there," Crousser said. The water swelled most of the area's lakes, minor rivers, creeks, streams and drainage systems far beyond capacity. It flowed with such force that bridges were washed out and thousands of homes were damaged. Much of that water then drained into the Cumberland, which snakes through Nashville. The Cumberland topped out around 6 p.m. Monday at 51.9 feet, about 12 feet above flood stage and the highest it's reached since 1937. It began to recede just in time to spare the city's only remaining water treatment plant. Still, about 50 Nashville schools were damaged and floodwaters submerged hundreds of homes in the Bellevue suburb alone, including Lisa Blackmon's. She escaped with her dog and her car but feared she lost everything else. "I know God doesn't give us more than we can take," said Blackmon, 45, who lost her job at a trucking company in December. "But I'm at my breaking point."

May 4, 2010

It sounds like a Hollywood movie. An impending disaster -- think the disabled spacecraft in "Apollo 13" or the asteroid hurtling toward Earth in "Armageddon" -- prompts a daring intervention by engineers to save the day. This time, the threat is real -- oil gushing from a broken well on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico that could destroy livelihoods and irreplaceable coastal wetlands. Equally real is the attempted engineering marvel -- a four-story metal container that will be lowered onto the leaking pipe to try to suck in the flowing oil. Officials of BP, the oil giant that owns the leaking well, said Monday they plan to try the unprecedented effort this week. If successful, they say, the "pollution containment chamber" could reduce the underwater gusher by more than 80 percent and provide the first success in industry and government efforts to control the spill that began April 20 with an explosion and fire on an offshore rig. "Everyone's committed to getting this stopped so we can just focus on a cleanup," said Doug Suttles, the BP chief operating officer. The challenges are vast and varied, reflecting the scope of the problem. The gushing well is 5,000 feet under water at the bottom of the ocean, where the immense pressure makes it impossible for humans to work. So far, unmanned submarines called "remote operation vehicles" have been trying unsuccessfully to fix a defective "blowout preventer" -- the failsafe gadget that should have prevented the leak in the first place. Now BP has started drilling a relief well that eventually could allow them to close off the broken well. However, that would take at least two months to work, Suttles said. Their plan is to lower the chamber to the ocean floor where the biggest of three leaks in the well's underwater piping occurs. It would straddle the pipe and lock itself into the seabed, so that the leaking oil goes into the chamber itself. Then the question becomes how to pipe it up to a giant tanker on the surface, 5,000 feet up. It is by far the deepest attempted use ever of such a containment chamber, according to BP officials. "This has been done in shallow water; it's never been done in deep water before," Suttles said. The engineers will rely in part on the laws of physics to their advantage, Suttles said. Because water pressure is greater than oil pressure, it should help push the oil to the surface, he said. If all goes well, the containment chamber could be in place and hopefully pumping up much of the spilling oil by the end of the week, Suttles said. BP workers also are building a smaller containment chamber for another leak in the pipe, he said, and hope to close a third leak with a shutoff valve as soon as Tuesday. So far, an estimated 2.6 million gallons of oil, roughly 60,000 barrels, has spilled into the Gulf of Mexico, forming a slick the size of the state of Delaware. The oil continues to gush at a rate of at least 5,000 barrels a day, authorities estimate, and the growing slick could come ashore at any time to destroy sensitive wetlands that are vital for the huge local fishing industry and other resources. That leaves the pollution containment chamber, a 100-ton, 40-foot-tall rust brown device that workers were still putting together Monday in the Port Fourchon, Louisiana, work yard, where welders' torches showered sparks as gulls flew overhead. It is the biggest such chamber ever constructed, BP officials say.

May 5, 2010

A 100-ton contraption to help funnel out oil spewing from the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico was loaded onto a barge Wednesday so it could begin its journey to the leak site about 50 miles off the Louisiana coast. The giant-concrete-and-steel box is the best short-term solution to bottling up the disastrous oil spill that threatens sealife and livelihoods along the Gulf Coast. BP spokesman John Curry said it would be deployed on the seabed by Thursday and hooked up to a drill ship over the weekend. The barge was expected to start its trip later Wednesday. The box is the latest idea engineers from oil giant BP PLC are trying after an oil rig the company was operating exploded April 20, killing 11 workers. It sank two days later. BP is in charge of the cleanup and President Barack Obama and many others have said the company also is responsible for the costs. BP capped one of three leaks at the well Tuesday night, a step that will not cut the flow of oil but that BP has said will make it easier to help with the gusher. Two satellite images taken Wednesday morning indicate oil has reached the Mississippi Delta and the Chandeleur Islands off the coast of Louisiana. It's not clear whether the oil is on shore, but it's very close, said Hans Graber, director of the University of Miami's satellite sensing facility. U.S. Coast Guard Lt. James McKnight said crews remained at the Chandeleurs on Wednesday after officials got a report of oil coming ashore, but they have not located it. "They're sitting there, basically, waiting for the first signs of any kind of a sheen to touch the islands," he said. Graber said the images also show oil drifting south, toward the Loop Current, which scientists say could carry it toward Florida and the Florida Keys. The northern edge of the current may have already picked up some oil. Florida officials fearing tourists will cancel their vacations are trying to quash rumors that oil is already washing up on beaches there. "We are not two or three days away from it hitting the shore," said David Halstead, Florida's emergency management chief. "The beaches are still open." The long-term effects of the spill on wildlife are not yet clear. Dead endangered turtles have been washing up on Gulf Coast beaches, but they have no signs of oil and federal fisheries officials are investigating whether aggressive shrimpers may have killed them. Efforts to stop the oil before it gets to shore picked up Wednesday. Coast Guard crews said they were preparing to corral some and set it on fire, which they last tried April 28. A 28-minute burn then removed thousands of gallons, but weather had not allowed them to do it again. Waves and wind were calm Wednesday. In Plaquemines Parish, near the southern tip of Louisiana, officials loaded absorbent boom shortly after dawn to take out to the mouth of the Mississippi River. The barge will be used as a distribution point for local fishermen to lay the boom around sensitive marshes. At a nearby marina, local shrimpers planned to use their boats to put down boom as part of a program BP is running. The Coast Guard said officials planned to send out about 80 vessels from Biloxi and Pascagoula, Miss., and Orange Beach, Ala., primarily to handle booming. Two Coast Guard cutters would also conduct offshore skimming operations. Crews in Mississippi are picking up debris from beaches to make cleanup easier if oil comes ashore. In all, about 7,900 people are working to protect the shoreline and wildlife, and some 170 boats are also helping with the cleanup. A rainbow sheen of oil has reached land in parts of Louisiana, but forecasts showed the oil wasn't expected to come ashore for at least a couple more days. "It's a gift of a little bit of time. I'm not resting," Coast Guard Rear Adm. Mary Landry said. In their worst-case scenario, BP executives told members of a congressional committee that up to 2.5 million gallons a day could spill if the leaks worsened, though it would be more like 1.7 million gallons. In an exploration plan filed with the government in February 2009, BP said it could handle a "worst-case scenario" it described as a leak of 6.8 million gallons per day from an uncontrolled blowout. Containment boxes have never been tried at this depth -- about 5,000 feet -- because of the extreme water pressure. If all goes well, the contraption could be fired up early next week to start funneling the oil into a tanker. "We don't know for sure" whether the equipment will work, BP spokesman Bill Salvin said. "What we do know is that we have done extensive engineering and modeling and we believe this gives us the best chance to contain the oil, and that's very important to us." The rig was owned by Transocean Ltd. Some of the surviving workers who were aboard when it exploded are suing that company and BP PLC. In lawsuits filed Tuesday, three workers say they were kept floating at sea for more than 10 hours while the rig burned uncontrollably. They are seeking damages. Guy Cantwell, a spokesman for Transocean, defended the company's response, saying 115 workers did get off alive. Two wrongful death suits also have been filed. While officials worked on cleanup, the long wait took its toll on nerves and incomes. Perdido Key, a barrier island between Pensacola and the Alabama state line with sugar-white sand studded with condominiums, likely would be the first place in Florida affect by the oil spill. Perdido --

Spanish for "Lost" -- got a sniff Tuesday morning of what may be in store. "You could smell the smell of it, real heavy petroleum base," said Steve Owensby, 54, a maintenance man at the Flora-Bama Lounge abutting the state line on the Florida side. The air cleared later, but Owensby's 28-year-old daughter, Stephanie, who tends bar at the lounge, said some visitors have complained of feeling ill from the fumes. "It's very sad because I grew up out here," she said. "I remember growing up seeing the white beaches my whole life. Every day I've been going to the beach ... a lot of people are out watching and crying."

May 19, 2010

An Upstate grooming shop is using their excess pet hair to help clean up the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Employees at All Paws on Main in Duncan said that in years past they would just throw the leftover pet hair in the trash, but now they are donating it to an organization called Matter of Trust. The California-based group is collecting the hair to help with the clean up of the oil slick. According to the group's website, the hair is bundled together to absorb the oil from the water. Workers at All Paws said that it is a small way they can help with the disaster. "We decided it will be helpful and a good way to recycle hair," said owner Priscilla Gilliam. "I think it's a good thing for us to do instead of throwing it away in a landfill." Gilliam said that so far they have two big bags that will be shipped off on Thursday.

May 20, 2010

Government officials are keeping a close eye on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, but think there's only a small chance of oil washing up on the Carolinas coast. Authorities in both states said on Thursday plans are in place to deal with an oil spill. Some experts believe there is a chance that oil from the ruptured well in the gulf could reach the loop current and then past Florida into the Atlantic. If that were to happen, the oil would be largely dispersed by the time it moved north. Also, the Gulf Stream would likely keep it 60 miles or more offshore. Officials said that it would be several weeks before the Carolinas would be affected, if at all, by the spill.

May 24, 2010

Nearly 2,700 people were without power after a strong storm swept through Greenwood County late Sunday night. The thunderstorm moved through western Greenwood County at about 11 p.m. and lasted for about 20 minutes. Three families in the Hide Park neighborhood on Highway 25 awoke to find trees had fallen on their homes. Officials said that debris left behind was blocking some secondary roads, but the main roads were not affected. The number of people without power shrunk to about 1,000 as of 8:30 a.m. Monday.

May 24, 2010

The BP executive in charge of fighting the Gulf of Mexico oil spill said Monday his company knows people are frustrated by its failure to plug the well that has been gushing for more than a month and is now spreading damage through Louisiana's wetlands. Doug Suttles, chief operating officer at BP PLC, went on all three U.S. network morning talk shows with the same message: "We are doing everything we can, everything I know," he said on NBC's "Today" show. Millions of gallons of oil have already spewed from the well that blew out after a drilling rig exploded April 20 off the Louisiana coast. Company spokesman John Curry said it will be at least Wednesday before BP will try using heavy mud and cement to plug the leak, a maneuver called a top kill that represents the best hope of stopping the oil after several failed attempts. BP initially said it would try Tuesday, but Curry said more time is needed to get equipment in place and test it. "Our goal, of course, is to succeed," Curry said. "We want this as much as anyone and our best chance of success is looking like Wednesday morning." Several officials from President Barack Obama's administration led a delegation of U.S. senators who surveyed the affected areas from the air Monday, then held a press conference to emphasize that the cleanup is BP's responsibility. "We are going to stay on this and stay on BP until this gets done and it gets done the right way," said Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. BP said Monday its costs for the spill had grown to about \$760 million, including containment efforts, drilling a relief well to stop the leak permanently, grants to Gulf states for their response costs, and payment of damage claims. BP said it's too early to calculate other potential costs and liabilities. At least 6 million gallons of crude have spewed into the Gulf,

according to a Coast Guard and BP estimate of how much is coming out, though some scientists say they believe the spill has already surpassed the 11 million-gallon 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill off Alaska as the worst in U.S. history. A mile-long tube operating for about a week has siphoned off more than half a million gallons, but it began sucking up oil at a slower rate over the weekend, and even at its best it wasn't capturing all of what is leaking. The spill's impact on shore now stretches across 150 miles, from Dauphin Island, Ala. to Grand Isle, La. With oil pushing at least 12 miles into marshes in his state and two major pelican rookeries coated in crude, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal said crews have begun work on a chain of berms made with sandbags, reinforced with containment booms, that would skirt the state's coastline. "This oil threatens not only our coast and our wetlands, this oil fundamentally threatens our way of life in southeastern Louisiana," he said at Monday's press conference. On Barataria Bay, some brown pelicans coated in oil could do little more than hobble. Their usually brown and white feathers were jet black, and eggs were glazed with rust-colored gunk. The birds got spooked when wildlife officials tried to rescue one, and officials were not sure they would try again. Pelicans are especially vulnerable to oil because they dive into the water to feed. They could eat tainted fish and feed it to their young, or they could die of hypothermia or drown if their feathers become soaked in oil. The birds were removed from the federal endangered species list just six months ago. Oil has also reached a 1,150-acre oyster ground leased by Belle Chasse, La., fisherman Dave Cvitanovich. He said cleanup crews were stringing lines of absorbent boom along the surrounding marshes, but that still left large clumps of rust-colored oil floating over his oyster beds. Mature oysters might eventually filter out the crude and become fit for sale, but this year's crop of young oysters will perish. "Those will die in the oil," Cvitanovich said. "It's inevitable." Officials said last week that 264 birds, sea turtles and dolphins had been found dead or stranded on shore that may have been affected by the spill, though Roger Helm, chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's contaminants division, said the death toll is certain to rise as the oil moves deeper into the marshes. In contrast, hundreds of thousands of birds, otters and other animals were killed after the Exxon Valdez spill in 1989. Helm said the biggest reason for the relatively low death toll from the Gulf spill is that until recently, most of the oil remained far out to sea. "But if the oil does really start fouling up the marshes, you can expect the numbers of oiled birds to go up significantly," he said

May 25, 2010

Forecasters said that a low pressure system off the Carolinas coast could mean rip currents along beaches in the two states. The National Weather Services advised that beach swimmers should use caution Tuesday. The combination of the low pressure system and higher than normal tides as a result of the full moon could mean rip currents, especially around the time of low tide about midday. Rip currents are narrow channels of water that pull swimmers away from the beach. If caught in a rip current, people should swim along the shoreline. Officials say swimmers should then swim at an angle away from the current toward shore. They warn that swimming directly against a rip current can lead to exhaustion and drowning.

May 26, 2010

A tanker truck that sprung a leak at an Anderson County gas station forced the shut down of a road on Wednesday. Anderson County Fire Chief Billy Gibson said that the call about the leak came in at about 10:30 a.m. from the Pilot Truck Stop at exit 35 off Interstate 85. Gibson said that the truck's driver had stopped at the station to sleep and when he woke up he noticed the leak. He said that the truck is hauling acrylonitrile, a flammable and dangerous chemical. The area is well ventilated and no evacuations were ordered, Gibson said. He said that Frontage Road, which runs in front of the station, was been shut down as a precaution. Gibson said that about 20 gallons leaked from the tanker. A cleanup crew has been called in to mop up the spill.

May 27, 2010

An untested procedure to plug the blown-out oil well in the Gulf of Mexico seemed to be working, officials said Thursday, but new estimates from scientists showed the spill has already surpassed the Exxon Valdez as the worst in U.S. history. A team of scientists trying to determine how much oil has been flowing since the offshore rig Deepwater Horizon exploded April 20 and sank two days later found the rate was more than twice and possibly up to five times as high as previously thought. The fallout from the spill has stretched all the way to Washington, where the head of the federal agency that oversees offshore drilling resigned under pressure Thursday. Even using the most conservative estimate, the new numbers mean the leak has grown to nearly 19 million gallons over the past five weeks, surpassing the size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska, which at about 11 million gallons had been the nation's worst spill. Under the highest Gulf spill estimate, nearly 39 million gallons may have leaked,

enough to fill 30 school gymnasiums. "Now we know the true scale of the monster we are fighting in the Gulf," said Jeremy Symons, vice president of the National Wildlife Federation. "BP has unleashed an unstoppable force of appalling proportions." BP did not immediately comment on the new estimate. U.S. Geological Survey Director Marcia McNutt said two different teams of scientists calculated that the well has been spewing between 504,000 and more than a million gallons a day. BP and the Coast Guard estimated soon after the explosion that about 210,000 gallons a day was leaking, but scientists who watched underwater video of well had been saying for weeks it was probably more. Marine scientists also said Thursday they have discovered a massive new plume of what they believe to be oil deep beneath the Gulf, stretching 22 miles from the leaking wellhead northeast toward Mobile Bay, Ala. The discovery by researchers on the University of South Florida College of Marine Science's Weatherbird II vessel is the second significant undersea plume recorded since the rig exploded. David Hollander, associate professor of chemical oceanography at the school, says the thick plume was detected just beneath the surface down to about 3,300 feet and is more than 6 miles wide. Scientists are worried the plumes may be from chemicals used to break up the oil. Last week, BP inserted a mile-long tube to siphon some of the oil into a tanker. It sucked up 924,000 gallons, but engineers had to dismantle it so they could start the risky procedure known as a top kill to try to cut off the flow altogether by shooting heavy drilling fluid into the well. If that works, BP will inject cement into the well to seal it. The top kill has been used above ground but has never been tried 5,000 feet beneath the sea. BP pegged its chance of success at 60 to 70 percent. Lt. Commander Tony Russell, an aide to Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, said Thursday the mud was stopping some oil and gas but had a ways to go before it proved successful. The top kill started Wednesday night and it could be several days before officials know if it is working. "As you inject your mud into it, it is going to stop some hydrocarbons," Russell said. "That doesn't mean it's successful." BP spokesman Tom Mueller also discounted news reports that the top kill had worked. "We appreciate the optimism, but the top kill operation is continuing through the day today -- that hasn't changed," he said Thursday morning. "We don't anticipate being able to say anything definitive on that until later today." In Washington, meanwhile, Minerals Management Service Director Elizabeth Birnbaum stepped down just hours before a planned White House press conference where President Barack Obama was expected to extend a moratorium on new deepwater oil drilling. Birnbaum and her agency came under withering criticism from lawmakers of both parties over lax oversight of drilling and cozy ties with industry. An internal Interior Department report released earlier this week found that between 2000 and 2008, agency staff members accepted tickets to sports events, lunches and other gifts from oil and gas companies and used government computers to view pornography. Birnbaum had run the service since July 2009. After receiving the results of a 30-day safety review from Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Obama also planned to delay controversial lease sales off the coast of Alaska and cancel entirely plans for drilling lease sales in the Western Gulf and off the coast of Virginia, according to a White House aide. Polls show the public is souring on the administration's handling of the catastrophe, and fishermen, hotel and restaurant owners, politicians and residents along the 100-mile stretch of Gulf coast affected by the spill are fed up with BP's failures to stop the spill. Thick oil is coating birds and delicate wetlands along the Louisiana coast. "I have anxiety attacks," said Sarah Rigaud, owner of Sarah's Restaurant in Grand Isle, La., where the public beach was closed because blobs of oil that looked like melted chocolate had washed up on shore. "Every day I pray that something happens, that it will be stopped and everybody can get back to normal." Seven cleanup crew members who reported dizziness, severe headaches and nausea while working in boats off the Louisiana coast remained hospitalized Thursday. The Coast Guard pulled commercial fishing boats from cleanup efforts in Breton Sound on Wednesday after workers first reported feeling sick. If the top kill fails, BP says it has several backup plans, including sealing the well's blowout preventer with a smaller cap, which would contain the oil. An earlier attempt to cap the blowout preventer failed. BP could also try a "junk shot" -- shooting golf balls and other debris into the blowout preventer to clog it up -- during the top kill process. The only permanent solution is drilling a second well, but that will take a couple of months. BP plans to go ahead with that even if the top kill works. Though the spill is now the biggest in U.S. history, it's not the biggest ever in the Gulf. An offshore drilling rig in Mexican waters -- the Ixtoc I -- blew up in June 1979, releasing 140 million gallons of oil.

June 1, 2010

Gov. Mark Sanford is traveling to South Carolina's coast to talk with emergency officials as the hurricane season gets under way. The governor will be in Horry, Charleston and Beaufort counties on Tuesday to discuss hurricane preparedness in what experts say may be a busy storm season. The National Hurricane Center is projecting 23 named tropical storms with 14 becoming hurricanes with top winds of 74 mph or higher. Forecasters said that as many as seven of those hurricanes could become major hurricanes with sustained winds of at least 111 mph. Sanford held a discussion in Columbia last month with emergency officials to discuss plans for the new hurricane season. The hurricane season started Tuesday and runs through the end of November.

June 1, 2010

BP lost billions more in market value Tuesday when shares fell steeply in the first trading day since the company failed to plug the worst oil spill in U.S. history, as investors realized the best chance to stop the leak was months away and there was no end in sight to the cleanup. As hurricane season began on the fragile Gulf Coast, BP settled in for the long-term. With the ambitious "top kill" abandoned over the weekend, BP's hope to stanch the leak lies with two relief wells that won't be finished until at least August. The company is, however, trying another temporary fix to contain the oil and siphon it to the surface by sawing through the leaking pipe and putting a cap over the spill. The cleanup, relief wells and temporary fixes were being watched closely by President Barack Obama's administration. Obama planned to meet for the first time Tuesday with the co-chairmen of an independent commission investigating the spill, while Attorney General Eric Holder was headed to the Gulf Coast to meet with state attorneys general. Obama's energy czar, Carol Browner, said she doesn't want to guess the prospects for success on BP's containment cap. Interviewed Tuesday on ABC's "Good Morning America," Browner said, "I don't want to put odds on it. ... We want to get this thing contained." Browner also said she's concerned about the effect the hurricane season, which began Tuesday, could have on ending the environmental crisis. To accommodate more than 500 workers hired to clean up the worst oil spill in U.S. history, BP and several subcontractors have set up floating hotels, or "flotels," made up of steel boxes resembling oversized shipping containers and stacked atop barges. At Port Fourchon, the oil industry's hub on the Gulf, a flotel there is the only way to station workers in a massive shipyard surrounded by ecologically sensitive marshes and beaches. "There are no permanent residents here on the port," said Dennis Link, a manager from a BP refinery who's handling logistics at the 1,300-acre site that's easily accessible by ship, but reachable on land only by a state road that snakes through the bayous. On Monday afternoon, the living quarters on the flotel sat empty. Generators pumped in cool air and powered the lights, and at the foot of each bunk sat a towel, washcloth and individually wrapped bar of soap. If necessary, four tents on dry land nearby can house 500 more workers. Workers will likely be trucked in on the two-lane state road. The accommodations on the barge are Spartan, but comfortable -- similar to military barracks. Each pod contains 12 bunks, with a bathroom for every four. Per Coast Guard standards, each resident gets 30 square feet of space in the quarters. The barge has 10 washers, 10 dryers and a kitchen, although food will be served in a tent on land. The quarters are typically floated alongside offshore oil rigs to supplement housing on the drilling operations. Another flotel sits about 15 miles away, off Grand Isle, and BP plans to establish them elsewhere along the coast. Meanwhile, the company's share price, which has fallen steadily since the start of the disaster, took a turn for the worse Tuesday, losing 15 percent to \$6.13 in early afternoon trading on the London Stock Exchange. That was the lowest level in more than a year. The shares have now lost more than a third of their value, wiping some \$63 billion off BP's value, since the explosion at the Deepwater Horizon oil rig six weeks ago. BP said early Tuesday it had spent \$990 million so far on fighting and cleaning the spill, with multiple lawsuits for damages yet to be tallied. Cleanup efforts are being ramped up while BP tries the latest of patchwork fixes, this one the cut-and-cap process. The risky procedure could, at least temporarily, increase the oil flowing from the busted well. Using robot submarines, BP plans to cut away the riser pipe this week and place a cap-like containment valve over the blowout preventer. On Tuesday, live video feeds showed robot submarines using a circular diamond saw to cut pipes at the bottom of the Gulf. "We are well into the operation to put this cap on the well now," BP Managing Director Bob Dudley told NBC's "Today" show on Tuesday. BP failed to plug the leak Saturday with its top kill, which shot mud and pieces of rubber into the well but couldn't beat back the pressure of the oil. The oil company also announced plans Monday to try attaching another pipe to a separate opening on the blowout preventer with some of the same equipment used to pump in mud during the top kill. The company also wants to build a new freestanding riser to

carry oil toward the surface, which would give it more flexibility to disconnect and then reconnect containment pipes if a hurricane passed through. Neither of those plans would start before mid-June and would supplement the cut-and-cap effort. The spill has already leaked between 20 million and 44 million gallons, according to government estimates. For the relief well to succeed, the bore hole must precisely intersect the damaged well, which experts have compared to hitting a target the size of a dinner plate more than two miles into the earth. If it misses, BP will have to back up its drill, plug the hole it just created, and try again. "The probability of them hitting it on the very first shot is virtually nil," said David Rensink, incoming president of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, who spent most of his 39 years in the oil industry in offshore exploration. "If they get it on the first three or four shots they'd be very lucky." The trial-and-error process could take weeks, but it will eventually work, scientists and BP said. Then engineers will then pump mud and cement through pipes to ultimately seal the well. On the slim chance the relief well doesn't work, scientists weren't sure exactly how much -- or how long -- the oil would flow. The gusher would continue until the well bore hole collapsed or pressure in the reservoir dropped to a point where oil was no longer pushed to the surface, said Tad Patzek, chair of the Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering Department at the University of Texas-Austin.

June 3, 2010

Computer models show oil leaking from a damaged well in the Gulf of Mexico could wind up on the East Coast and even get carried on currents across the Atlantic Ocean toward Europe. The National Center for Atmospheric Research models showed Thursday that oil could enter the Gulf's loop current, go around the tip of Florida and as far north as Cape Hatteras, N.C. According to researchers, oil could threaten East Coast beaches by early July, but they cautioned the models were not a forecast. The oil could then head by Bermuda on its way to Europe. Martin Visbeck, a research team member with the University of Kiel in Germany, says it is unlikely any oil reaching Europe would be thick enough to be harmful.

June 7, 2010

A geyser of oil spewing from the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico is slowly tapering off with the help of a wellhead cap, but there's no containing much of the crude that's already escaped, a reality becoming increasingly evident at the region's beaches and marshes. The battle to contain the oil is likely to stretch into the fall, the government's point man on the spill warned. The cap will trap only so much of the oil, and relief wells being drilled won't be completed until August. Meanwhile, oil will continue to shoot out. To Kelcey Forrestier, a 23-year-old biology graduate visiting Okaloosa Island, Fla., it was already clear Sunday that the spill and its damage will last long into the future. "Oil just doesn't go away. Oil doesn't disappear," said Forrestier, of New Orleans. "It has to go somewhere and it's going to come to the Gulf beaches." Lifeguards found a "very minor" set of fingernail-size tar balls over the weekend on the western edge of the island about 35 miles east of Pensacola, marking the easternmost point oil has been discovered ashore. Officials reported Sunday afternoon that a sheen of oil was spotted about 150 miles west of Tampa, though they did not expect the slick to reach the western Florida peninsula in the near future. The oil's westernmost limit is about 100 miles east of the Texas-Louisiana border, said Texas General Land Office spokesman Jim Suydam. Officials put out a report late Sunday that dead, oiled birds had been found in Texas but retracted it Monday morning. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokeswoman Nancy Brown blamed the mistake on a clerical error. BP said Monday that the cost of the response has reached about \$1.25 billion. The company said the figure does not include \$360 million for a project to build six sand berms meant to protect Louisiana's wetlands from spreading oil. The prospect that the crisis could stretch beyond summer devastated residents along the Gulf, who are seeing more and thicker globs of oil appear all along the coast. In Gulf Shores, Ala., Jerry Chessey went for a walk on the beach Monday, stopping on a sandy spot. He was surrounded by clumps of brown seaweed full of rust-colored oil. At his feet, a small yellow cup was coated with black crude, which apparently washed ashore overnight from deeper water. "It's disappointing," said Chessey, who drove to Gulf Shores with his wife from their home in Cincinnati. "We walked on the beach last night and didn't see any oil. But we walked up to the condo, and it was all over our feet." In Florida, tar balls continued to roll onto Pensacola Beach and left a distinct line in the sand from the high-rise condos above as the sun rose Monday morning. Beach walkers had to stay between the line

of dime- and quarter-size tar balls and the retreating surf or risk getting the gummy, rust-staining gunk stuck to their feet. Jody Haas, a tourist from Aurora, Ill., was among the few walking the beach early Monday after a crowded weekend here. Haas, who had visited the beach before, said it was not the same. "It was pristine, gorgeous, white sand," she said. "This spot is light compared to some of the other spots farther down and (the tar) is just everywhere here. It's just devastating, awful." At Pensacola Beach on Sunday, the turquoise waves also were flecked with floating balls of tar. Buck Langston, who has been coming to the beach to collect shells for 38 years, watched as his family used improvised chopsticks to collect the tar in plastic containers. "Yesterday it wasn't like this, this heavy," Langston, of Baton Rouge, La., said Sunday. "I don't know why cleanup crews aren't out here." Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, overseeing the government's response to the spill, has expressed similar frustration, ordering cleanup crews to the Alabama coastline after surveying the scene from the air. But he acknowledged the relative futility of their efforts. "It's so widespread, and it's intermittent," he told The Associated Press on Saturday. "That's what's so challenging about this. Everyone wants certainty. With an oil spill like this, there isn't any." Since it was placed over the busted well on Thursday, the cap has been siphoning an increasing amount of oil. On Saturday, it funneled about 441,000 gallons to a tanker on the surface, up from about 250,000 gallons it captured Friday. But it's not clear how much is still escaping from the well, which federal authorities have estimated was leaking between 500,000 gallons and 1 million gallons a day. Since the spill began nearly seven weeks ago, roughly 23 million to 50 million gallons of oil have leaked into the Gulf. The inverted funnel-like cap is being closely watched for whether it can make a serious dent in the flow of new oil. Allen reserved judgment, saying he didn't want to risk offering false encouragement. "This will be well into the fall," he said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation." "This is a siege across the entire Gulf. This spill is holding everybody hostage, not only economically but physically. And it has to be attacked on all fronts."

June 7, 2010

A mudslide shut down part of a highway in Transylvania County on Monday morning. Emergency crews discovered the slide on Highway 276 while they were responding to another call for help. Road crews worked for more than two hours to clear the dirt from the roadway. The North Carolina Department of Transportation said it planned to be at the scene on Monday afternoon to assess any other dangers the slide may pose to drivers.

June 9, 2010

Firefighters said that lightning may have started a fire at a home in Spartanburg on Thursday afternoon. The fire happened at a large home on East Main Street in the Converse community. Both sides of the roadway were closed as crews battled the blaze. Authorities said that the homeowner was taken to Spartanburg Regional Hospital and treated for injuries. Officials said that the fire started in the attic. The homeowner's son told FOX Carolina that the fire may have been started by a lightning strike. The American [Red Cross](#) was also at the scene to help firefighters because of the heat.

June 10, 2010

Highway 9 in Boiling Springs was reopened Thursday after a [natural gas](#) tank started leaking next to the Applebees on Rainbow Lake Road. Officials said that Piedmont Natural Gas was looking into the cause, but customers inside the Applebees said that they saw a lightning bolt strike the ground where the gas tank was located. Officials said that may be what caused the leak. Emergency management personnel said this could have been a catastrophic situation, because the gas was leaking so fast. Authorities evacuated all businesses within a half mile radius of the leak, and reopened the road at about 9 p.m. No injuries were reported.

June 11, 2010

Nearby residents were allowed back into their homes after a train derailment prompted an evacuation on Thursday night. Officials with the train line Norfolk Southern said the scene should be cleared by Friday night. The Liberty Fire Department said that 24 freight cars left the tracks near the intersection of south Norman Street and Farmers Hill Road on Thursday afternoon. Initially, 436 homes were evacuated near the scene, but the Department of Health and Environmental Control took air samples, and determined that the air quality was not affected. Everyone was allowed back in their homes by Friday morning. According to a statement by DHEC spokesman Thom Berry, a car carrying isopropyl alcohol, also known as rubbing alcohol, had flipped. He said that the alcohol is very flammable. Emergency workers went door to door to evacuate homes within a mile radius between Old Norris and Ruhamah roads. Authorities also said they used the reverse 911 system to notify area residents. Residents who had to leave their homes were directed to the Eastside Baptist Church on Anderson Drive. At a news conference Thursday, Lynn Fisher, Pickens County assistant county administrator and emergency management director, said the initial call about the Norfolk Southern train derailment came in at about 4:30 p.m. The train was traveling from Atlanta to Linwood, N.C. when it derailed in an area where, on average, 24 to 26 trains pass through the area every day, officials said. Crews used booms, similar to those being used to contain the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, to clean up the liquid. However, they are taking precautions as fumes from the spill may cause dizziness and suffocation.

June 11, 2010

New numbers showing the amount of oil gushing from a well in the Gulf of Mexico may be double as much as previously thought means the crude is likely to travel farther away, threatening more birds, fish and other wildlife that call the fragile waters their home, scientists said Friday. The new figures could mean 42 million gallons to more than 100 million gallons of oil have already fouled the Gulf's delicate ecosystem and are affecting people who live, work and play along the coast from Louisiana to Florida -- and perhaps beyond. More oil means the giant gooey cloud can spread out over a greater distance, having far worse consequences for the environment, said Paul Montagna, a marine biologist at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. "Doubling the amount of oil does not have a linear effect, it doesn't double the consequences, it may instead have quadruple the consequences," Montagna, who studies the Gulf of Mexico deep sea reefs and other underwater ecosystems, said. The new spill estimates released Thursday are worse than earlier ones -- and far more costly for BP, which has seen its stock sink since the April 20 explosion that killed 11 workers and triggered the spill. Most of the new estimates had more oil flowing in an hour than what officials once said was spilling in an entire day. The spill was flowing at a daily rate that could possibly have been as high as 2.1 million gallons, twice the highest number the federal government had been saying, said U.S. Geological Survey Director Marcia McNutt, who is coordinating estimates. But she said possibly more credible numbers are a bit lower. Those estimates were the third -- and perhaps not the last -- time the U.S. government has had to increase its estimate of how much oil is gushing. Trying to clarify what has been a contentious and confusing issue, officials gave a wide variety of figures on Thursday. But none of the estimates took into account the cutting of the well's riser pipe on June 3 -- which BP said would increase the flow by about 20 percent -- and subsequent placement of a cap. No estimates were given for the amount of oil gushing from the well after the cut. Nor are there estimates since a cap was put on the pipe, which already has collected more than 3 million gallons. The increased estimates presents a larger danger to the animals who live the Gulf's coastal marshes, said John Andrew Nyman, a wetlands ecologist at Louisiana State University. The brown pelican population was believed to be near its healthy capacity before the spill, but with the spill affecting a larger area, the increase in pelican deaths could seriously impact the bird's recent recovery, he said. Also of particular concern were tuna, billfish such as marlin, sailfish and swordfish, which tend to spawn in the region of the Gulf affected by the spill, said Jim Franks, a fisheries biologist at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. "We are now into spawning season. The location and magnitude of the spill, the young life stages of these fish, the larval forms, are in a precarious situation," Franks said. The oil flow estimates are not nearly complete and different teams have come up with different numbers. A new team from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute came in with even higher estimates, ranging from 1 million gallons a day to 2.1 million gallons. If the high end is true, that means nearly 107 million gallons have spilled since April 20. The Obama administration's point man for the Gulf Coast oil spill acknowledged Friday that reliable numbers are hard to get. "I think we're still dealing with the flow estimate. We're still trying to refine those numbers," said Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen said. But even using other

numbers that federal officials and scientists call a more reasonable range would have about 63 million gallons spilling since the rig explosion. If that amount was put in gallon milk jugs, they would line up for nearly 5,500 miles. That's the distance from the spill to London, where BP is headquartered, and then continuing on to Rome. By comparison, the Exxon Valdez, the previous worst U.S. oil spill, was just about 11 million gallons. The new figures mean Deepwater Horizon is producing an Exxon Valdez size spill every five to 13 days. Meanwhile, oil still was washing up on Gulf beaches. But it wasn't as bad Friday morning at Orange Beach, Ala., as it had been earlier in the week. Waves brought in a foot-long chunk of what appeared to be solid oil on the white sand. One side was flat and curved, while the other was honeycombed with bubbles and a single spot where crude oozed out. Standing near the water line, Elaine Fox picked it up without a thought. "I'm not dead, I'm not sick," Fox, of West Monroe, La., said Friday. "I think a lot of this is nothing but media hype." With all sorts of estimates for what's flowing from the BP well. McNutt said the most credible range at the moment is between 840,000 gallons and 1.68 million gallons a day. She added that it was "maybe a little bit more." Scientists used sonar, pressure readings and video analysis to make the new estimates. Previous estimates had put the range roughly between half a million and a million gallons a day, perhaps higher. At one point, the federal government claimed only 42,000 gallons were spilling a day and then it upped the number to 210,000 gallons. Allen said that it will be at least July before BP has the tankers in place to capture oil spilling from the well. And if undersea efforts to direct the oil to the surface succeed, it will take weeks to get the proper equipment in place to hold it, he said. A day earlier, the White House released a letter from Allen inviting BP Chairman Carl-Henric Svanberg and "any appropriate officials from BP" to meet Wednesday with senior administration officials. Allen said Obama, who has yet to speak with any BP official since the explosion, would participate in a portion of the meeting.

June 14, 2010

The heat and humidity felt in the western Carolinas to start the work week is not going anywhere anytime soon, FOX Carolina chief meteorologist Kendra Kent said Monday. Kent said that high temperatures in the Upstate topped out in the middle and upper 90's, while the mercury climbed into the upper 80's and lower 90's for the mountains. She said that high humidity made the temperatures feel more like 100 degrees at times. Monday's highs are about 10 degrees above the average, Kent said. Overnight lows will not bring a tremendous amount of relief from the heat, Kent said. She said that low temperatures are forecast to only drop to the 70's in the Upstate and upper 60's in the mountains. Experts with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest people spend as much time in the air conditioning as possible during a heat wave. They said that people who must spend time outside should drink plenty of non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages, wear lightweight and light-colored clothing and take frequent breaks in the shade. Experts also said that no one should ever leave a pet or child in a closed, parked vehicle. They also suggest that residents check on the elderly neighbors to make sure they are coping with the heat as they are at greater risk of suffering from heat-related illnesses. Don't forget the sunblock. Experts recommend an SPF of at least 15 that read "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels. Kent said that a weak cold front will move into the area by mid-week, knocking temperature down a degree or two, but will not provide much relief.

June 15, 2010

The National Weather Service issued a heat advisory for the southern Upstate on Tuesday. The advisory is in effect from noon until 8 p.m. for Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens and Union counties in South Carolina and Elbert County in Georgia. The weather service said that high temperatures for the advised area are forecast to climb into the upper 90s. Some could break the century-mark, they said. They said that the high heat, combined with the high humidity, should lead to heat index values near 105 degrees for the area. Monday's highs of more than 90 degrees for much of the Upstate are about 10 degrees above the average for this time of year, FOX Carolina chief meteorologist Kendra Kent said. Overnight lows will not bring a tremendous amount of relief from the heat, Kent said. She said that low temperatures are forecast to only drop to the 70s in the Upstate and upper 60s in the mountains. Experts with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest people spend as much time in the air conditioning as possible during a heat wave. They said that people who must spend time outside should drink plenty of nonalcoholic, non-

caffeinated beverages, wear lightweight and light-colored clothing and take frequent breaks in the shade. Experts also said that no one should ever leave a pet or child in a closed, parked vehicle. They also suggest that residents check on elderly neighbors to make sure they are coping with the heat as they are at greater risk of suffering from heat-related illnesses. Don't forget the sunblock. Experts recommend an SPF of at least 15 that says "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on its label. Kent said that a weak cold front will move into the area by midweek, knocking temperature down a degree or two, but will not provide much relief.

June 17, 2010

Sporadic showers continued to pop up in the town of Liberty on Wednesday, but nothing like the strong storms that caused so much damage there the day before. "It was just a lot of chaos," said Rusty Johnson, as he picked up branches from his yard. On the other side of a mountain of limbs stood Johnson's home. Wind snapped trees in the front yard and another tree smashed his deck. "The deck is just demolished and you can see the root of the tree," he said. Motorcycles, a four-wheeler and a new hot tub are now crushed under the massive oak tree that at one time stood more than 60 feet tall. "I was just shocked," said Ivy Johnson, Rusty Johnson's daughter. She said she's never seen anything like it before. "It was very white," she said. "It wasn't dark. You couldn't even see the next house beside us." Not only did branches snap from trees, the trunk also snapped their power line which put them in the dark for several hours. "The lights kept on flickering and I went upstairs to get a better view and all I saw was a funnel thing," she said. The cleanup at the Johnson home, like many others in Pickens County, may take awhile.

June 21, 2010

The Department of Health and Environmental Control has issued an ozone action day for the Upstate on Tuesday. DHEC said that increased ground-level ozone concentrations could affect active children, adults and people with respiratory diseases. Officials said that people should limit prolonged outdoor exertion during Tuesday. DHEC said that residents can take steps to reduce the formation of ground-level ozone, including carpooling, staying inside during lunch instead of driving to a restaurant and avoiding excessive idling in a vehicle.

June 22, 2010

A company in the Upstate is playing a part in the Gulf cleanup following the worst oil spill in the nation's history by making equipment that is used to suck up oil. The vacuum excavator, manufactured in Greenville County, works somewhat like a home vacuum by sucking up gunk and leaving everything else behind. "It's similar to a Shop-Vac that you would have in your home, just on a much larger scale," said Brian Garbee, of the McLaughlin Group. Company officials said the devices clean with minimal damage to the environment. Currently, eight of the industrial vacuum excavators are being used in the Gulf of Mexico. Millions of gallons have been seeping into the Gulf since April. As the oil continues to leak, the demand for these locally-made vacuums grows. The McLaughlin group said it plans to hire 10 to 12 new workers to keep up with the demand. Yet, for the company officials, the new business comes with mixed emotions. "You hate to see something like that," said Garbee, "but on the other side, we would like to think of it more as that we are helping. We didn't cause the issue. We didn't have a lot of control, but at least we have somewhat of a say in the cleanup of the environmental mess." Officials estimate the cleanup could take years to complete, and company officials admitted they didn't know how many vacuums it would take to suck up all the oil now flowing in the gulf. "Honestly, I have no idea -- not being down there, not seeing the scope of it," said Garbee. "I would say a lot." The company president sent a letter to environmental groups working in the gulf explaining how the vacuums work and how they could help in the cleanup effort. A company representative is also stationed in the gulf as a contact person.

June 24, 2010

It's a star, but when it's out and shining, not everyone is star struck about it. In fact, for some the sun can be downright brutal. "Oh it's very hot, especially when you're out all day," said Anthony Cromer, a landscaper with

New Frontier Property Care. "We keep a cooler on the [truck](#). We drink plenty of water and a lot of Gatorade." On Wednesday, temperatures rose to nearly 100 degrees. On days like that, Cromer said when he's trying to manicure lawns, he's a sweaty mess. "So we're ready for a shower when we get home-- a cold one," Cromer said. Administrators with the Salvation Army said several people have stopped by to ask for donated fans because of the heat. "I call ourselves the place of hope," said Major Bobby Lancaster, area commander with the Salvation Army in Greenville and Pickens County. "It's hot enough," Lancaster said. "As they used to say, you can fry an egg on the sidewalk." People who are less fortunate go to the Salvation Army to get assistance. "We like making changes in people's lives when we have that opportunity to do so," Lancaster said. Lancaster said that in the past month, people have donated 20 fans and now there are only two left. "It's awfully hard to tell somebody no if you don't have the fans," Lancaster said. Lancaster said that anyone who would like to donate a fan can stop by their local Salvation Army office. High temperatures Thursday were forecast to top out in the upper 90s in the Upstate and lower 90s in the mountains, approaching record territory. Forecasters said that high humidity will push the heat index values above 100 degrees.

Attachments



Government

PROGRAMS ADDRESSING PROBLEM OR NEED SECOND QUARTER 2010

Problem/Need: **GOVERNMENT**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
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Sundays	10:00 am	FOX NEWS SUNDAY
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Description:

Fox News Sunday is a national weekly program with current events and political issues. (60:00)

April 2, 2010

A tax on tobacco has gotten a lot of attention this week. Yet, what some people don't know is that a bottle of alcohol is taxed more than a pack of cigarettes. The big question is why lawmakers are now going after tobacco and not adding more tax to alcohol when both have proved to have dangerous consequences. That's a question state Sen. Larry Martin said he hears all the time. "Take on one interest group at a time. If you take on alcohol and tobacco at the same time you wouldn't stand a chance at being successful on either front," Martin said. So why take on tobacco first? "My understanding is from a policy point of view is alcohol in South Carolina is taxed at a rate that reflects one of the highest rates in the country," said Barney Sullivan, who owns his own packaging store in Greenville. "And then on cigarettes, on tobacco, we're last and the idea was to catch up in that area." Sullivan said when you buy a bottle of liquor, half the price is tax. "Fifty percent of a bottle of liquor is tax and if you increase the tax on that a lot of people will stop drinking," Sullivan said. State senators have given initial approval to raising the tax on cigarettes from 7 cents a pack to 50 cents a pack. Martin said they are still talking about where the funds should be used.

April 2, 2010

Some supporters of the Confederacy are trying to have a new race counted on the 2010 Census - Confederate Southern Americans. The Southern Legal Resource Center is using the popular video Web site, You Tube, to encourage self-proclaimed Confederates to declare their culture. They want people to write "Confederate Southern American" as the answer to question No. 9, which asks for the respondent's race. "This is an opportunity for us to put our numbers on record," said Kirk Lyons, of the Southern Legal Resource Center. "Tell the government how many of us there are and tell our fellow citizens how many of us there are." Michael Graham, a person who supports the push, said that for too long their group has been harassed, humiliated and discriminated against for being proud of their heritage. "Don't get me wrong," Graham said. "Slavery was wrong, but there were other things involved in the war too. The general confusion is that we are all racist, stupid, rednecks and we lost the war so we need to shut up. We don't want our history changed. We ask that the truth be told." Wayne Mickey with the Census board in Anderson County said that respondents are welcome to write whatever they want in the field. He said he's just not sure how the race will be counted.

April 5, 2010

The Greenwood City Council has begun debating an ordinance that would ban the sale of alcohol between 2 and 6 a.m. The city's proposed rule comes after the Greenwood County Council passed its own version of the ordinance two weeks ago for unincorporated areas. Greenwood Mayor Welborn Adams said that the rule would require all bars and clubs to close down at 2 a.m. City leaders are also looking at a similar ordinance in Atlanta that would stop all alcohol sales at 2 a.m., but require them to close 30 minutes later. Adams said that city police have to deal with things like shootings, stabbings, vandalism, fights and drug-related activities at bars and clubs. He said that is why he is pushing so hard for the ordinance. The mayor said that the council could vote on the measure at its regular meeting on April 19.

April 12, 2010

A legislative panel is set to debate a bill that would eventually eliminate corporate income taxes in South Carolina. The bill up for discussion Monday in a Senate Finance subcommittee would phase out corporate income taxes over 10 years, starting in 2013. The state collects about \$168 million yearly from the tax. It's the third largest source of state revenue behind sales and individual income taxes. Senators on the panel have been divided on approving another tax cut during the recession. The proposal approved by the House last month also would immediately eliminate corporate income taxes for companies that move their headquarters to the state. Other economic incentives in the bill include increasing tax credits for companies that use renewable energy sources.

April 13, 2010

A legislative panel has decided not to eliminate corporate income taxes in South Carolina -- for now. A Senate Finance subcommittee on Monday removed key provisions of an economic incentives bill before advancing it to the full committee. The bill as passed by the House

last month would have phased out corporate income taxes over 10 years, starting in 2013. The state collects about \$168 million yearly from the tax. The 5 percent tax rate is the third-largest source of state revenue behind sales and individual income taxes.

April 13, 2010

South Carolina legislators are again debating whether to legalize charity raffles and friendly poker games in residents' homes. A House subcommittee is set to debate on Tuesday proposals to revise the state's centuries-old gambling laws. A bill would allow in-house social gambling and let charities raise money by selling raffle tickets. A proposed constitutional amendment also up for discussion would ask voters whether raffles by churches, schools and other charities should be legal. Similar bills have languished for several years. In December, a Circuit Court judge reversed the gambling convictions of five Texas Hold'em players arrested in a 2006 raid on a Mount Pleasant home. But Attorney General Henry McMaster has asked the state Supreme Court to override that decision.

April 13, 2010

The cash race has tightened for Republican gubernatorial hopefuls in South Carolina. A review of campaign finance reports on Monday shows that Attorney General Henry McMaster raised \$430,078 in cash for his primary bid during the second quarter. Trailing closely were Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer's \$397,978 and U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett \$393,161. McMaster's campaign officials said it felt good to be gaining financial ground and political momentum in the run-up to the June 8 primary. Barrett had the most cash remaining for the contest with \$1.6 million with McMaster and Bauer having \$1.4 million. State Rep. Nikki Haley had \$530,023 on hand. Furman University political scientist Danielle Vinson said that's enough for Haley to mount a credible campaign.

April 15, 2010

The news just keeps getting worse for South Carolina state senators as they resume work on a \$5 billion spending plan. The Senate Finance Committee plans to meet into the night on Thursday to deal with the last blows. On Wednesday, they learned there were two big mistakes in key budget numbers. The Board of Economic Advisors cut \$60 million from its revenue estimate because of a mistake involving the transfer of cash the Revenue Department has been collecting. They also found out the state's Medicaid agency figures were \$67 million off. Senate Finance Chairman Hugh Leatherman said no one is going to like the budget he brings to the Senate floor for debate and legislators should prepare for calls about the loss of services, programs or jobs.

April 15, 2010

Budget writers in the South Carolina Senate have nixed House plans to end state health insurance plan coverage for abortions stemming from rape or incest. The 12 to 6 vote on Thursday came as the Senate Finance Committee resumed work on what's become a \$4.9 billion state spending plan. The House in a marathon session last month ended state health insurance plan for abortions unless they are needed to protect a mother's health. Republican Sen. Kevin Bryant, of Anderson, voted against the change and said allowing abortions for rape or incest would put blood on every taxpayer's hands. Others argued the exceptions for rape, incest and the mother's health in the current law are consistent with what federal law allows.

April 19, 2010

South Carolina congressman said a new federal complex planned for Greenville will cost about \$70 million. Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., told The Greenville News for a story published Monday that the project will cost much less than the more than \$130 million that had been estimated. The complex that will have more courtroom space and consolidate several federal agencies into one building across from the county courthouse has been in the works since 2001. In 2007, officials said projected costs had more than doubled because of delays. The General Services Administration oversees construction of federal courthouses. Officials said the design process is expected to begin this fall, with construction getting under way in 2013.

April 19, 2010

On Monday night, the Greenville City Council accepted Jim Bourey's request to resign as city manager. "I really loved being the city manager the last six years," Bourey said. Bourey also said the resignation was forced. "In this case, there's a comfort level that the manager needs to have and council needs to have with the manager, and that wasn't where they wanted to be." The vote was 6 to 1, with Amy Ryberg-Doyle voting against. Ryberg-Doyle listed several "highly visible and public-facing reasons" for why she voted against the resignation in a prepared statement that she read. Ryberg-Doyle then listed dozens of projects to illustrate why she thought he should remain city manager, including the revitalization of the West End, the redesign of the city's website, reorganization of the zoo, and negotiating with Duke Power to create underground utility lines. She also listed several awards won by Bourey's projects and employees, such as the national awards received by all departments for work regarding stormwater near the Liberty Bridge. "Ideas, dreams and vision are wonderful and they inspire us – but it is people make these ideas happen," Ryberg-Doyle said. Though Ryberg-Doyle did cede that there had been some split votes on many initiatives and some communication breakdowns, she emphasized that under Bourey, public money and public safety were never at risk and the city was able to avoid layoffs, unlike others nearby. "Your performance speaks volumes in the things you have done, (and) how you have

done them," she said. "Unfortunately, I stand in the minority on this issue. I wish my colleagues on Council felt the same." Deputy city manager John Castile will become the acting manager when Bourey leaves. "Jim's been a friend of mine and it's sad to see him go. I think it's a loss for Greenville," Castile said. Bourey's last day as city manager will be June 30 and he will receive six months severance pay. Despite Ryberg-Doyle's apparent praise, Bourey said he felt pressured to resign. Bourey told FOX Carolina News that he is considering new options after working in city governments for 33 years. "Right now, I'm looking at different professional options," Bourey said. "I've been city manager here for over six and a half years." According to the city's website, Bourey had been the Greenville city manager since 2004. In an earlier interview with FOX Carolina, Bourey said he is proud of what he has accomplished with the city. "I think we've done a lot of terrific things, but there are certain times in your career when you look around and say, 'Well, are there other things that I could be doing with the rest of my life?'" he said. "I'm doing that right now." Bourey said the decision to resign was very difficult and personal. Bourey's letter of resignation can be read in its entirety below: Dear Members of Council: Consistent with the terms of the Separation Agreement and my Employment Agreement, I am hereby submitting my resignation as City Manager effective June 30, 2010, unless the Effective Date is altered pursuant to our Agreement. It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve the City of Greenville for the past six years. During that time, the City has accomplished so much about which we can all feel great. We have had a wonderful team of the Council and staff. I will miss working with you all. Public service is about making a difference for the community. I have never felt better about that difference. I want to thank the City Council for allowing me this special opportunity. And I wish the City and its citizens continued progress. During the time that I will continue as the City Manager, I will work as hard as ever for our community. This is an amazing place with amazing people. It has been a great blessing to have made the City of Greenville my home. Thank you, James M. Bourey

April 20, 2010

South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford is announcing his choice to lead the reconfigured unemployment benefits agency. Sanford's announcement on Tuesday comes three weeks after he signed legislation creating a new Workforce Department that's part of his Cabinet. The law was designed to overhaul the troubled Employment Security Commission. Sanford's pick for an interim director will be vetted by a nine-member panel before the Senate approves the person. The temporary agency head will serve until March 2011. That's when Sanford's successor as governor will choose from candidates the panel will qualify. The role of the three-member commission that had overseen the agency and hired its director is now limited to hearing appeals on unemployment cases

April 21, 2010

The official manual of the South Carolina Legislature no longer references "Negro" or "Scalawag" in historical listings of Reconstruction leaders. The words quietly disappeared from the 2010 manual, a year after drawing scrutiny. House Clerk Charles Reid said that the listings of lieutenant governors and House speakers which included the references were first produced in the early 1900s and simply transferred to the book as is. African-Americans who held the offices from 1870 to 1876 were noted as "Negro" in parentheses beside their names. Reid said he decided to remove the terms from the 700-page manual distributed this week because they're irrelevant. Rep. Todd Rutherford applauded the removal. The black Democrat said the words went unnoticed for years, though he's shocked they had remained so long.

April 22, 2010

A bill barring drivers on South Carolina roads from sending or reading text messages has been delayed. A Senate Judiciary subcommittee was set to discuss the bill Thursday. But the meeting was canceled as debate about court fees on the Senate floor continued into the afternoon. The ban passed the House last month. Drivers convicted of the misdemeanor would be fined \$25. Officers couldn't confiscate phones, look through text or e-mail messages or require phone companies to provide them. For six months after the law is passed, officers couldn't stop motorists solely for texting. The Senate Judiciary panel has advanced a similar measure that has yet to be taken up by the full Senate.

April 30, 2010

One Upstate lawmaker has proposed a bill similar to the controversial immigration law recently passed in Arizona. If passed, the law proposed by state Rep. Eric Bedingfield, a Republican from Mauldin, would give police the right to pull someone over if they have probable cause and ask the person for identification that proves they are legal U.S. citizens. La Nueva's radio DJ, Juan Jose, has been fielding calls from the Hispanic community since the law making it a crime to be in the U.S. illegally passed in Arizona. Now, he said he is worried a similar law could become a reality in South Carolina. But some, like John Gaines, said they would support the change. "We tell these people, 'Look, you don't belong here in South Carolina, we want you out. You're not American citizens,'" said Gaines, who is part of South Carolina's Minutemen group. "Come in the right way, and we'll welcome you. But if you don't come in the right way, stay at home." Bedingfield said the bill was an effort to "reduce the overall cost of government spending, reduce drug- and street-level crime, and an effort to put South Carolinians back to work." Bedingfield said he welcomes all immigrants who are in the country legally. The bill is still in committee at this point and needs to move through both the House and Senate for a vote. Bedingfield said that he requested that the bill be placed on the House's calendar on Thursday, but that request was denied

May 3, 2010

South Carolina's attorney general said he will not criminally prosecute Gov. Mark Sanford for travel and campaign reimbursements that drew civil charges and the largest ethics fine in state history. McMaster on Monday said that the governor's use of pricey airline tickets, travel to personal and political events on state aircraft, and questionable campaign reimbursements had not risen to a criminal level. "While I've acknowledged repeatedly my own moral failing in this matter, we feel confirmed in our consistent belief that this administration has always been a stalwart defender of the taxpayer," Sanford said in a statement. "SLED's findings, the House Committee's dismissal of 32 of 37 ethics allegations, and the Attorney General's decision today reaffirm this long-held belief." McMaster for months had been reviewing the ethics probe that led to 37 charges and \$74,000 in civil fines Sanford paid in March. The scrutiny started when Sanford disappeared last June, returning after five days to admit to an extramarital affair. His second and final term ends in January. McMaster is one of four Republicans seeking to replace the governor.

May 3, 2010

Criminal defense attorney Bill Nettles has been sworn in as South Carolina's top federal prosecutor. Nettles was sworn in as U.S. attorney during a private ceremony on Monday. His office says a formal investiture ceremony will be scheduled later. The U.S. Senate approved Nettles' nomination last month. President Barack Obama in December nominated the 48-year-old attorney to succeed Walt Wilkins. Kevin McDonald has served as acting U.S. attorney since Wilkins left office in January. Nettles is a graduate of The Citadel and Widener School of Law. He served as a public defender in Richland County for two years before going into private practice. He has been practicing with his father-in-law, former judge and Charleston School of Law founder Alex Sanders.

May 4, 2010

South Carolina senators could send Gov. Mark Sanford a 50-cent cigarette tax increase. The Senate on Wednesday is expected to take up the final changes the House made several weeks ago to the nation's lowest cigarette tax. The current tax of 7 cents a pack hasn't changed since 1977, when a pack cost 48 cents. Senators nearly agreed to send the legislation to Sanford on Tuesday. However, they are reconsidering their original vote in debate set for Wednesday. The legislation generates about \$125 million for Medicaid programs. It also provides \$5 million each for cancer research and efforts to cut down on smoking and \$1 million for agricultural product marketing.

May 4, 2010

Polls have opened in North Carolina where primary voters dissatisfied with government have a chance to change direction. Voting for a series of federal and state posts began at 6:30 a.m., Tuesday, with polls scheduled to close at 7:30 p.m. Sue Meier, 46, of Wilmington, was one of the early voters. She said that she mostly was concerned about local issues. Meier said that she does not like Republican incumbent U.S. Sen. Richard Burr. She would not say which Democratic candidate she chose. About 170,000 voters cast a ballot in early voting that ended Saturday, roughly one-third the number that appeared for the presidential primary two years ago. State Board of Elections director Gary Bartlett said that he has been disappointed by the turnout and hopes Tuesday brings higher participation. Appeals court and legislative seats also are on ballots.

May 18, 2010

President Barack Obama is not on the ballot in Tuesday's primaries, nor is Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican Senate leader. But both have a stake in intensely competitive Senate races in three states, contests testing the strength of the tea party among Kentucky Republicans and the durability of incumbents in Arkansas and Pennsylvania. In a fourth race of national significance, Republican Tim Burns and Democrat Mark Critz battled to fill out the term of the late Democratic Rep. John Murtha in a congressional district in southwestern Pennsylvania. Both political parties reported spending roughly \$1 million to sway the race, turning it into a laboratory for the fall campaign, when all 435 House seats will be on the ballot. Oregon voters also faced a deadline for returning ballots in a statewide mail-in vote that began more than two weeks ago. Five-term Sen. Arlen Specter's race against Rep. Joe Sestak was a clear measure of experience vs. change, and the voters said so as they cast their ballots. "Politicians are like diapers. They both should be changed regularly," said Marc Coleman 41, of Philadelphia, who said he sided with Sestak. But across the state in Pittsburgh, Stephen Little, 48, said he voted for Specter. "He's been there so long, he's familiar with all the areas and information," he said. Not on the ballot, but also helping to raise Democratic stress levels: Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat seeking the seat being vacated by Sen. Chris Dodd, was defending himself against a report he misstated his military service during the Vietnam War. A New York Times report posted a video of him at a 2008 event saying he had "served in Vietnam." Blumenthal never served in Vietnam. His campaign said he joined the Marine Corps Reserves and served for six months in Parris Island, S.C. followed by six years in the reserves. Blumenthal told the Times he had misspoken at the 2008 event. He planned a news conference with Connecticut veterans on Tuesday. Connecticut Democrats meet Friday at their party convention to endorse a candidate. Blumenthal was considered the front-runner. Two potential Republican rivals immediately jumped on the Times story to criticize him. In Indiana, eight-term Republican Rep. Mark Souder announced he would resign from Congress, effective Friday, because he had an affair with a staffer. The decision raised the prospect that Democrats could capture the House seat in northeastern Indiana. On the eve of the

busiest primary night of the year so far, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Monday that Obama was following the races, but "not that closely." "We have supported incumbent Democratic senators and we've done a lot on behalf of each campaign," he added, referring to Lincoln and Specter. Last year, when Specter switched parties, Obama said he would give his full support to the veteran Pennsylvania lawmaker, and appeared with him at a rally in the fall. But the lack of a late campaign appearance contrasted with a special election in Massachusetts earlier this year, when Obama made a late campaign foray to try to help Martha Coakley win an election that she wound up losing. It also contrasted with the president's efforts on behalf of losing gubernatorial candidates in 2009 in Virginia and New Jersey. Nor was it clear what impact Obama's involvement in the day's primaries would mean for the incumbents, under extraordinary political pressure in a year of well-documented voter dissatisfaction with Washington. McConnell made no attempt to minimize his own interest in the Senate primary in Kentucky after making a late television commercial on behalf of Secretary of State Trey Grayson, battling tea party-backed Rand Paul. A spokesman, Don Stewart, said McConnell was watching the race in his home state closely, and added he doubted White House claims that Obama wasn't equally interested. "That sure would be a surprise given that he has two incumbents in close races," he said. While Grayson had support from the state's Republican establishment, Paul countered with backing from former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, retiring Sen. Jim Bunning and conservative Sen. Jim DeMint of South Carolina. DeMint has interceded in several primaries in hopes of pushing his party to the right, a decision that some Republicans say may portend a move for greater influence inside the Republican leadership led by McConnell. Among Democrats, Kentucky Attorney Gen. Jack Conway collided with Lt. Gov. Daniel Mongiardo for the right to take on the Republican winner. Mongiardo lost a close race to Bunning six years ago. Specter, 80 and a party-switcher, struggled for political survival in a primary with Sestak, who gained late momentum with a television ad. It showed his rival saying only a year ago that he quit the Republican Party to win a new term. Former Rep. Pat Toomey campaigned as the prohibitive front-runner for the Republican nomination, six years after losing to Specter in a GOP primary. In Arkansas, Lincoln sought renomination against Lt. Gov. Bill Halter. She emphasized her independence from party. Halter had the support of several unions that spent heavily in hopes of punishing the incumbent for votes on health care, trade and legislation to make it easier to organize workers. The presence of a third contender on the ballot, D.C. Morrison, raised the possibility that Lincoln might be forced into a politically debilitating runoff on June 8. Rep. John Boozman was the acknowledged Republican front-runner for the Senate nomination for a seat the GOP hopes to win in the fall. Oregon's mail-in primary produced little if any of the drama that was on display elsewhere. Sen. Ron Wyden sought the Democratic nomination to a third full term. Seven Republicans vied for the right to oppose him in the fall. Former Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber campaigned for his party's nomination for a return to office, and nine Republicans competed for the nomination to run against him. In Pennsylvania's gubernatorial primary, four Democrats and two Republicans vied to advance to the fall election. Gov. Ed Rendell, a two-term Democrat, was barred from seeking re-election.

May 18, 2010

The Greenwood City Council on Monday night tabled an ordinance that would ban the sale of alcohol in the city between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. The ordinance, which mirrors one that was passed in the county in March, has been discussed for about two months. Some bar and club owners said they feel that the 4-3 vote to halt discussion on the issue is a good thing. "I'm ecstatic," said Kevin Prater, owner of Sports Break. "I'm proud of our council for taking time and making sure they're going to get it right." Supporters of the measure have said that it would keep people from coming into the city after establishments in the county stop selling alcohol. Greenwood Mayor Welborn Adams said that the council will review the ordinance again and a vote could come next month in their regular meeting on June 21.

May 20, 2010

A South Carolina judge has ordered a political group spending heavily to promote Republican gubernatorial candidate Nikki Haley to pull its television ads supporting her campaign. Spartanburg County Judge James M. Hayes issued the order Wednesday at the request of Haley primary opponent U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett and three donors to ReformSC. The Charleston-based political group has been airing ads statewide that laud Haley as a conservative leader. Barrett's campaign has complained since the ads began airing last week, saying they don't mesh with state law limiting how outside groups can promote candidates and were coordinated with the Haley campaign. "The judge's order to pull down this ad speaks for itself, but obviously, this is a serious legal issue for ReformSC and Nikki Haley's campaign for governor," said Luke Byars, Barrett's campaign manager. ReformSC chairman Pat McKinney said last week the ads are legal and there was no coordination. "It's sad, but not surprising, that the entrenched powers in Columbia will do whatever they can to keep taxpayers in the dark," said Tim Pearson, Haley's campaign manager. "Nikki appreciates the efforts of the tens of thousands of South Carolinians who have added their voices to the fight to get legislators to vote on the record, and she urges them to keep up the fight." ReformSC has purchased airtime on WHNS-TV, but the station has not been served with papers as of this story ordering the ads be pulled.

May 24, 2010

The city of Clemson is about a week away before the new texting-while-driving ban takes effect, and officials spent most of the day Monday posting signs around town to remind residents of the new ordinance. Clemson Police Chief Jimmy Dixon said that crews put up 16 banners, dozens of posters and passed out pamphlets to make sure everyone is aware of the new ordinance. "We want to make sure we have enough visibility all throughout the city," Dixon said. "We want people to know there will be no texting and e-mailing in a moving vehicle." Dixon said that the ordinance gives officers the right to look through a person's phone to see when the last e-mail or text message was either sent or received. He said that anyone who is convicted of violating the new rule will be fined \$100 plus court costs.

June 1, 2010

Drivers in Clemson beware. The city's newly approved ban on texting-while-driving began on Tuesday. In February, Clemson became the first city in South Carolina to ban the practice, which not only includes text messages, but also e-mails. The ordinance gives officers the right to look through a driver's phone, to see when the last e-mail or text was either sent or received. Violators could be fined up to \$100, plus court costs.

June 2, 2010

Gov. Mark Sanford has signed into law a measure meant to reduce the number of people going to prison in South Carolina for minor offenses. The Republican governor signed the bill Wednesday morning. The new law is expected to save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars over the next five years by housing fewer inmates and reducing the need for more prisons. It is also designed to improve oversight and training of nonviolent offenders on parole in hopes they'll turn their lives around. The four most common offenses for South Carolina prison inmates are drug charges, burglary, check fraud and driving under suspension. Proponents said that the new law will ensure there is prison space for high-risk, violent criminals, inmates who will serve longer prison terms.

June 4, 2010

A Republican lawmaker trying to become South Carolina's first woman governor said that she would resign if she were elected and anyone proved she had an extramarital affair. State Rep. Nikki Haley said Friday she knows there will never be proof. She would not say what she would consider proof. Instead, she said that it is a moot question because nothing happened. Haley made the comments after two such accusations just days before voters head to the polls in the June 8 primary. Political blogger Will Folks said last month he had an inappropriate physical relationship with the candidate while he worked for her House re-election campaign in 2007. Lobbyist Larry Marchant said on Wednesday that he had a one-night stand with Haley during a 2008 trip to Utah. Neither man has offered concrete evidence of the relationships. The representative has refused to release her Statehouse correspondence records, which are exempt from public scrutiny under state law. Haley's campaign continued to say Friday that she will not waste time on what it calls nonsense. Former first lady Jenny Sanford issued a statement on Friday defending Haley. "I can't help but think that these attacks are being leveled at Nikki Haley because of the courageous stands she has taken over the years in defense of the taxpayers and government reform," Sanford said in the statement. "I am more convinced than ever that Nikki Haley is the best person to be South Carolina's next governor." Haley has said since the allegations began that she has been 100 percent faithful to her husband during their 13 year marriage.

June 4, 2010

A state senator described Republican gubernatorial candidate Rep. Nikki Haley as a "raghead" during an online political talk show on Thursday night, according to a report in The State newspaper. State Sen. Jake Knotts, a Republican from Lexington, also used the word to describe President Barack Obama during the interview, the paper said. "We already got one raghead in the White House, we don't need a raghead in the governor's mansion," he said, according to several people at the live broadcast of "Pub Politics." Haley is of Indian descent, while Obama has an African father and a white mother. "Jake Knotts represents all that is wrong with South Carolina politics," said Tim Pearson, Haley's campaign manager. "He's an embarrassment to our state and to the Republican Party. South Carolina is so much better than this, and the people of our state will make that quite clear next Tuesday." Knotts has said he supports Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer in the Republican primary battle. The senator later apologized for the slur, saying it was meant as a joke.

June 7, 2010

Many of South Carolina's gubernatorial candidates will be criss-crossing the state in an effort to drum up support ahead of Tuesday's primary. Republican Andre Bauer, South Carolina's lieutenant governor, has scheduled stops at the intersection of East Main and Pine streets in Spartanburg at 11:30 a.m. Then he will be at the Wal-Mart on West Floyd Baker Boulevard in Gaffney at 12:30 p.m. Attorney General Henry McMaster, also a Republican, is scheduled to speak to members of the Greenville County GOP at noon at the Poinsett Club on East Washington Street. Rep. Gresham Barrett, a Republican, has scheduled stops at the downtown airport in Spartanburg at 3 p.m. He has planned to stop at the downtown airport in Greenville at 4 p.m. At 6:30 p.m. he has a rally planned in Oconee County at the Train Depot in Westminster. State Rep. Nikki Haley, another Republican, did not have any stops in the Upstate scheduled for Monday. She will make stops in Bluffton and Charleston on Monday afternoon. Superintendent of Education Jim Rex, a Democratic candidate, has several stops planned in Columbia for Monday. After those his campaign said he will head to his home county of Fairfield, where he will cast his ballot tomorrow. State Sens. Robert Ford and Vincent Sheheen, both Democrats, did not release a specific schedule of events for Monday. Sheheen's camp did say he will not be in the Upstate on Monday. **Important Primary Voting Notes** Absentee voting for Tuesday's primary closes at 5 p.m. Monday. For regular voting, the polls will open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday. Voters must vote at the polling place listed on their voter registration card. They may be asked to show that card, a driver's license or a state-issued identification card at the polls. Voters are only allowed to vote in one party's primary. For instance, if a voter chooses a Republican ballot, they cannot vote for a Democratic candidate.

June 8, 2010

Some Greenville County voters casted their ballots on sidewalks, while others waited for machines to be set up on Tuesday morning as voting in the South Carolina primary began. Greenville County elections director Conway Belangia said a poll worker locked her keys in the car while unloading supplies at the Kilgore Farms precinct on Grimes Road in Simpsonville. Belangia said poll workers had to wait on AAA

to arrive before they could finish setting up the precinct. "Voting started about a half hour late," Belangia said. "The first voter was assisted at about 7:30 a.m." Belangia said at two other polls, the buildings were not unlocked in time for voting to begin at 7 a.m. He said poll workers set machines up on sidewalks outside precincts at the [Sears](#) Shelter in Greenville and at Simpsonville United Methodist Church. He said once the doors were unlocked, machines were moved inside. Belangia said problems with at least 12 of the county's 700 voting machines have experienced troubles Tuesday morning. He said replacement machines were taken to some precincts. At smaller precincts, however, voters may have experienced longer lines or a bit of a wait, while machines were down. Voters may cast their ballots until 7 p.m. By law, voting will not be extended at any of the polls that experienced problems. Voters must vote at the polling place listed on their voter registration card. They may be asked to show that card, a driver's license or a state-issued identification card at the polls. Voters are only allowed to vote in one party's primary. For instance, if a voter chooses a Republican ballot, they cannot vote for a Democratic candidate.

June 9, 2010

The second-place finisher in the South Carolina Republican gubernatorial primary said that he is staying in the runoff. U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett said Wednesday morning he is "absolutely" staying in the race against state Rep. Nikki Haley. Haley led Tuesday with 49 percent of the vote, while Barrett got 22 percent in the four-way contest. Barrett said that he has heard from no one about pulling out to give Haley a clear shot to the general election against Democrat state Sen. Vincent Sheheen. The Republican Governor's Association issued a statement Tuesday night calling Haley the clear choice. Barrett said that he cannot control what the association says. Barrett said he is not worried that the runoff would drain candidate resources before the election. "I believe that South Carolinians want a leader they can trust and be proud of," Barrett said in his post-primary speech. "That's what we're going to prove over the next two weeks." The Republican gubernatorial race gained national attention when two men claimed they had an affair with Haley. Since the allegations were made, Haley has vehemently denied them. She said in her post-primary speech on Tuesday night that she did not let the claims distract her. "I'm the sister of a family who, when all of this got dirty, they said, 'We are there for you. You fight. Don't stop,' and I thank you for that every day," Haley said. The runoff will happen on June 22. The winner will face Sheheen in the general election on November 2.

June 10, 2010

South Carolina's Democratic Party has asked its own Senate nominee to withdraw after learning the man has been charged with a felony, but the newly minted candidate says he will not budge. Chairwoman Carol Fowler said she asked Alvin Greene to withdraw from the campaign against U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint Wednesday after The Associated Press reported Greene had been charged with a felony. Court records show Greene was arrested in November and charged with showing obscene Internet photos to a University of South Carolina student. The felony charge carries up to five years in prison. Greene told the AP he is the people's choice and will not step aside. On Tuesday, Greene stunned state Democratic Party leaders by defeating a former state lawmaker, despite having no organized campaign.

June 10, 2010

The No. 3 Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives wants federal authorities to investigate how an unemployed South Carolina veteran won the state's Democratic primary for U.S. Senate. House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn said Thursday that he thinks a coordinated effort is behind Alvin Greene's shocking primary night victory over a former state lawmaker. Greene has not reported any fundraising in his challenge of Republican U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint. The unemployed military veteran said Thursday that there is no need for any investigation but would not say if anyone helped him pay the more than \$10,000 filing fee. Party officials asked Greene to sit out of the race after The Associated Press reported he faces a felony charge, but Greene said he is staying put.

June 11, 2010

South Carolina Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer said Friday that he is backing U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett in his bid for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Barrett will face off against state Rep. Nikki Haley in a runoff on June 22 after neither of them snagged the required 50 percent of the vote during Tuesday's primary. Bauer was also one of the four contenders for the nomination. He finished in last place with 12 percent of the vote. The lieutenant governor said in a statement to the media that there is only one candidate he can trust to accomplish the goals he focused on during his campaign. "I hope the media and the voters take these next two weeks to really look at the candidates," Bauer said. Haley came in first place during the primary with 49 percent of the vote, while Barrett came in second with 22 percent. Barrett has said he will not bow out of the race ahead of the runoff.

June 17, 2010

South Carolina's Democrats are gathering to decide whether to overturn the results of the primary election that saw an unemployed, unknown military veteran [win](#) the nomination for U.S. Senate. The state party's executive committee is meeting Thursday in Columbia to hear a protest by former state lawmaker Vic Rawl. Rawl said that malfunctions in voting machines or software may have caused him to lose the June 8 Democratic primary to political unknown Alvin Greene. Rawl said that voters have told him they meant to vote for him but saw Greene's name on their screens instead. The executive committee could uphold the election, order a new primary or find that problems were so significant that Rawl should be declared the winner. Greene said he will not attend. Greene has come under fire after an investigation by

The Associated Press revealed that he is charged with a felony. It also revealed that Greene asked for a court-appointed attorney in the case. He was, however, able to afford the \$10,000 filing fee necessary to run in the Democratic primary.

June 17, 2010

South Carolina Republican gubernatorial hopefuls U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett and state Rep. Nikki Haley will discuss issues in the only scheduled broadcast debates of the runoff campaign. Thursday's debates are crucial for Barrett. Haley nearly won the nomination outright with 49 percent of the vote to Barrett's 22 percent on June 8. He hopes to use the debates to close that gap. The pair will appear in an hourlong debate Thursday at 5 p.m. on Greenville's WORD-FM. The debate will also be streamed on the radio station's Internet site. Then the two will be at WIS-TV in Columbia for an hourlong debate that begins at 8 p.m. That debate also will be streamed on the station's Internet site. The winner of Tuesday's runoff will face Democrat Vincent Sheheen in November.

June 17, 2010

A South Carolina Democratic committee decided Thursday night that the results of the U.S. Senate primary will stand, making Alvin Greene the party's nominee. The state party's executive committee met in Columbia to hear a protest by former state lawmaker Vic Rawl. Rawl said that malfunctions in voting machines or software may have caused him to lose the June 8 Democratic primary to political unknown Greene. Rawl said that voters have told him they meant to vote for him but saw Greene's name on their screens instead. The executive committee could have ordered a new primary or found that problems were so significant that Rawl should be declared the winner. Greene did not attend. Greene has come under fire after an investigation by The Associated Press revealed that he is charged with a felony. It also revealed that Greene asked for a court-appointed attorney in the case. He was, however, able to afford the \$10,000 filing fee necessary to run in the Democratic primary. Thursday's decision means that Greene will face incumbent Republican Sen. Jim DeMint in November's general election.

June 21, 2010

No more loud whistling as you walk down the streets in one South Carolina coastal town. No singing, either. The Post and Courier of Charleston reported that Sullivans Island Town Council approved an ordinance last week that added singing, whistling, hooting and hollering on public streets to a list of possible disturbing noises. The proposal could get final approval next month. It would make loud noises on public streets illegal late at night or at any time or place if it's annoying people nearby. Sullivans Island town administrator Andy Benke said that the wording comes from North Charleston, where annoying singing already is illegal. A North Charleston police spokesman said he cannot recall the city fining anyone for singing..

June 21, 2010

Voters in both North and South Carolina will head to the polls on Tuesday to decide races that could not be decided during the primaries. In South Carolina, the polls will open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. In North Carolina, the polls will open at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. Voters in South Carolina will be deciding several big races, including the Republican gubernatorial nomination, where U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett and state Rep. Nikki Haley will face off. Haley nearly won the primary outright with 49 percent of the vote, just one point shy of the necessary 50 percent. Barrett came in second with 22 percent of the vote. Upstate voters will also decide which Republican will advance to the general election in the U.S. House District 4 race. Incumbent Congressman Bob Inglis and Solicitor Trey Gowdy will face off in the runoff. Gowdy came in first with 39 percent of the vote during the primary, while Inglis came in second with 28 percent. Another Congressional nomination is up for grabs in U.S. House District 3, where Richard Cash and Jeff Duncan are meeting for a second time. Anderson County voters will also be deciding the Republican nominee for County Council in districts 1 and 6. Cherokee County voters will determine the Republican nominee for sheriff Tuesday. South Carolina voters will also be deciding the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor, attorney general and superintendent of education. Voters in western North Carolina will name a Democratic nominee in a U.S. Senate race. Swain County voters will pick a Democrat to advance to the general election in the race for sheriff, while Mitchell County voters will pick a Republican.

June 23, 2010

Nikki Haley's victory in South Carolina's bruising GOP primary for governor moves the state lawmaker closer to becoming her state's first woman chief executive while assuring her a place on the national political scene. Haley's primary victory sets off talk of a possible vice presidential campaign in 2012. As an Indian-American woman from an early primary state, she would bring a combination of diversity and conservatism that many in the GOP have been seeking. Haley was little known just months ago, but got a crucial boost with early support from former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin and the tea party movement. Along the way, she weathered rumors of infidelity and questions about her religious and ethnic background. Haley will face state Sen. Vincent Sheheen in the general election in November. The Republican becomes the first woman and Indian-American to head a major political party's ticket in South Carolina.

June 23, 2010

South Carolina Rep. Bob Inglis has been bounced from his longtime seat by a well-known prosecutor after challengers questioned the Republican's conservative credentials. Trey Gowdy, of Spartanburg, won the GOP primary runoff Tuesday. Inglis has always scored well with conservative organizations. But his challengers this year painted him as a liberal who voted for Wall Street and banking bailouts in 2008. He also raised activists' ire by telling them to turn off political commentator Glenn Beck. Inglis failed to overcome the primary odds. He placed second in the five-way primary two weeks ago. Inglis was first elected to the seat in 1992. He left after six years to honor his term-limits pledge but sought the seat again in 2004. Gowdy will face Democrat Paul Corden, Green Party nominee C. Faye Walters, Libertarian Rick Mahler and Constitution Party nominee Dave Edwards in November.

June 23, 2010

Florence County councilman Ken Ard has won the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor in South Carolina. Ard defeated Orangeburg lawyer and military veteran Bill Connor in Tuesday's GOP runoff and will face Democratic Charleston lawyer Ashley Cooper in November. Ard also won the four-way GOP race two weeks ago. The lieutenant governor succeeds the governor should the top officeholder die or leave office. Official duties include presiding over the Senate and overseeing the state Office on Aging. Two-term Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer stepped down in an unsuccessful run for governor.

June 23, 2010

A state legislator has won the Republican nomination to replace U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett. Rep. Jeff Duncan of Laurens defeated political newcomer Richard Cash in Tuesday's GOP primary runoff in the 3rd District. He will face FedEx pilot and former Air Force Capt. Jane Dyer in November. Duncan is a four-term lawmaker known for sponsoring bills that are pro gun rights and anti-illegal immigration. He celebrated the win at a hunting preserve in Clinton. The 44-year-old real estate broker and auctioneer was endorsed by Washington-based Club for Growth. Cash criticized the out-of-state money. Cash owns a fleet of ice cream trucks and a used car dealership. It was a come-from-behind win for Duncan. Cash had a lead of less than 2,000 votes in the six-way primary.

June 29, 2010

Greenville named its first African-American city manager during a meeting Monday night. Deputy City Manager John Castile was named to the city's top job after former City Manager Jim Bourey resigned, saying he was forced out by City Council. Greenville Mayor Knox White also joked during the meeting. He said that Castile is making history by being the first Furman University graduate to become city manager. Castile said that he is grateful for his new position. "Jim has allowed me, in a very comfortable way, to get more and more involved in municipal government," Castile said. "My style is a little different in the sense that I will be extremely inclusive with our department and director and give council information in a timely manner for them to make decisions." "He has done an absolutely outstanding job, and I have every confidence in the work he will do and the community will be proud as well," said former City Manager Jim Bourey. Castile became overwhelmed with emotion as he talked about his new position, which officially begins July 1. He said that one of the first projects he will look at is the burying of the city's power lines.

June 29, 2010

Students at the Allen Arms Indoor Range in Greenville County shot at targets Monday. They said they are learning how to protect themselves. "Just to be more familiar with a gun and how to use it in a real-life situation, just so you're prepared," said Amanda Deanhardt, a student at the shooting range. Deanhardt signed up to take the shooting defense class at Allen Arms. "If the bad guys have a gun, I want to be able to protect myself and not feel vulnerable," she said. "I feel that every person should have the right to bear arms." Judges on the U.S. Supreme Court think so, too. In a five-to-four ruling based on the Second Amendment, a decision was made to allow handguns in the city of Chicago. Frank Allen is the owner of Allen Arms. He said the ruling is a victory for all Americans. "So, this says not only does the federal government have to recognize it as an individual law, but the lower government also," Allen said. He said that could mean local governments that don't allow guns may have their laws overturned. "Now, the criminal has to make a decision," Allen said. "Is my potential victim armed, do I have to consider that?" He said in South Carolina there's a preemption law which will not allow local government to override a state law. He said for now that means students at the range and other gun owners don't have anything to worry about. Allen said it is illegal to shoot a gun in the city of Greenville unless it is in self-defense. But, it's not illegal to have a gun as long as the owner has a proper permit. Some who support gun control laws said the new ruling could mean more guns on the streets and in the wrong hands.

June 29, 2010

Legislators will decide the fate of a bill requiring South Carolina voters to show a photo ID and also allowing them to cast a ballot early. The bill could die Tuesday unless the House and Senate agree. House GOP leaders have said that showing a photo is an issue of voter integrity, but they do not like pre-Election Day voting. A compromise between House and Senate Republicans allowed eight days of no-excuse early voting, but in only one location per county. It also limited other absentee voting. Democratic senators blocked its passage, wanting more time to vote in more locations. Hartsville Sen. Gerald Malloy said that if House leaders want to require voters to show a photo ID, they'll have to go along with the Senate version.

June 29, 2010

The Senate on Wednesday unanimously confirmed Gen. David Petraeus as the new commander of the Afghanistan war. The vote was 99-0. Petraeus replaces Gen. Stanley McChrystal, whose three-decade career ended in disgrace because of inflammatory remarks he and his aides made to Rolling Stone magazine. As U.S. Central Command chief, Petraeus was McChrystal's boss and already overseeing operations in Afghanistan. Petraeus' replacement at Central Command has not been announced. Petraeus won overwhelming praise from both Republicans and Democrats, despite their disagreements on the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan. "For those who doubt the president's desire and commitment to succeed in Afghanistan, his nomination of Gen. Petraeus to run this war should cause them to think twice," said Sen. John McCain, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee. "I know that Gen. Petraeus will do everything in his power to help us succeed in Afghanistan," McCain added. During his confirmation hearing on Tuesday, Petraeus left open the possibility of recommending that President Barack Obama delay his plans to start withdrawing troops from Afghanistan next summer. Petraeus also told senators that he may change the war's battlefield rules, designed to limit civilian casualties and improve support for U.S. and NATO forces fighting the Taliban-led insurgency. Some troops and congressional Republicans complain they handicap U.S. forces. "My sense is that the tough fighting will continue; indeed, it may get more intense in the next few months," Petraeus told the Senate panel. "As we take away the enemy's safe havens and reduce the enemy's freedom of action, the insurgents will fight back."

Attachments



Jobs, Economy, Growth

**ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
SECOND QUARTER 2010**

Problem/Need: **JOBS/ECONOMY/GROWTH**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
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April 5, 2010

Automaker BMW Manufacturing Co. plans to hire about 200 temporary production and logistics workers at its South Carolina plant. The Greenville News reported last week that applicants need a stable work history, a high school diploma or GED and be capable of working 10-hour shifts. BMW announced in October it was looking for 700 temporary workers as it added two new production shifts at the Greer plant. BMW uses staffing firm MAU to hire workers for its Greer facility. MAU spokesman Brett Yardley said some of the current positions the company is looking to fill could be turnover in that original group hired and some are new positions. The plant makes BMW's X5 and X6 models and will begin production of the X3 later this year.

April 9, 2010

Two newspapers in North Carolina and South Carolina will merge some editorial functions, including sharing an executive editor and managing editor. The Times-News of Hendersonville reported Friday that Mike Smith, the executive editor of the Herald-Journal of Spartanburg, S.C., will assume responsibility for the Times-News. Also, the sports editor at the Herald-Journal, Burke Noel, will become managing editor for both newspapers. Noel will be based in Hendersonville. The newspapers are both owned by The New York Times Co. The Times-News also said it eliminated four positions Thursday, including that of executive editor Bill Moss. The newspaper is also moving into a new office in Hendersonville this weekend.

April 13, 2010

More than two-thirds of Americans who've been unable to sell their home and buy one that better fits their needs have cut back on household expenses such as food, entertainment and clothing in order to pay their mortgage, a survey released Tuesday shows. Homeowners who have fallen on financial hard times have made other sacrifices and lifestyle changes: About a third have downsized to a smaller home or delayed expanding their family as planned. And, a quarter of homeowners who want to sell their current home and buy another say they need to make the move in order to lower their monthly expenses due to financial problems. The survey, conducted for Move Inc., found wide-ranging concerns about the financial condition of homeowners in a challenging economy, but also unearthed evidence of increased demand among investors in residential real estate. "Concerns around employment and their overall economic situation are causing many people to wait until the economy improves before they commit to one of the largest purchases they'll most likely make in their lives," said Errol Samuelson, chief revenue officer for Move, which runs the Realtor.com and Move.com Web sites. A stronger housing market will be an important part of the nation's economic recovery. As home sales and prices rise, consumer optimism usually follows suit, leading homeowners to feel wealthier and make them more comfortable spending. Despite economic concerns, investor interest in the housing market is growing, according to the survey. About 17 percent of potential home buyers say they plan to purchase a home in the near future as an investment. That's three times the investor interest seen in March 2009. Also, investor interest in purchasing a foreclosed property to fix up and resell rose from 11.3 percent in October 2009 to 16 percent in March, a 42 percent increase. Strong demand persists among first time homebuyers, the survey showed. One in five consumers say they plan to purchase a home in the next 12 months to five years. Of those, half are first-time buyers, with men being somewhat more interested in entering the housing market as a first-time buyer than women. First-time buyers have until April 30 to sign a contract for a home purchase and qualify for a tax credit of up to \$8,000. The telephone poll, which included 1,004 interviews, was conducted in March by GfK Custom Research North America. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

April 15, 2010

A company that plans to build electric buses in South Carolina said production will begin in July. The Greenville News reported that officials with Proterra, Inc., said Wednesday the first 10 employees have been hired. The company plans to start production in a temporary facility and also plans to break ground in July on a permanent factory at Clemson University's International Center for Automotive Research in Greenville. Proterra's Westy Bowen said the first employees hired in South

Carolina will go to Colorado next month for training. Those 10 workers are expected to be leaders in Greenville. Company officials have said previously the plant could employ up to 1,300 workers. Bowen said the company already has more orders than it can produce at the Colorado facility.

April 15, 2010

A California medical equipment maker said it will put a distribution center in South Carolina, creating 50 jobs over the next year. The Herald-Journal of Spartanburg reported that ResMed Corp. plans to spend \$3 million for the center in Duncan. A company spokeswoman says ResMed will bring about three dozen current employees to the facility and will hire the others over the next year. ResMed specializes in non-invasive equipment for treating, diagnosing and managing sleep-disordered breathing and other respiratory disorders. ResMed vice president Ric Wonders said the Spartanburg County location allows the company to consolidate East Coast operations and have room to expand.

April 16, 2010

South Carolina added almost 16,000 jobs in March and the state's jobless rate fell slightly to 12.2 percent. The Employment Security Commission said Friday that March's rate was down from a revised 12.4 percent in February. South Carolina had the sixth-highest rate in the nation, but that was an improvement over recent months when the state ranked in the top three. The national jobless rate in March was unchanged from February at 9.7 percent. The state's overall labor force shrank by almost 1,000 jobs, but the number of people unemployed and actively seeking work dropped by more than 5,600. Every sector except manufacturing showed job gains for the month, but the state still had about 15,000 fewer jobs in March than it did a year earlier.

April 20, 2010

BMW AG is cutting production at its assembly plant in Spartanburg, S.C., because the volcanic eruption in Iceland has disrupted delivery of key parts for two SUVs. BMW spokesman Jan Ehlen said that volcanic ash is grounding planes that bring leather seat covers from South Africa and transmissions from Europe. He said that the plant will not stop production, but employees will work shorter shifts until the supply of parts returns to normal. The Spartanburg plant builds the X5 and X6 SUVs for the German automaker. Spartanburg is BMW's only assembly plant in the U.S. Ash from the Icelandic volcano has brought trans-Atlantic flights to a near standstill for five days, stranding travelers and disrupting businesses.

April 22, 2010

Officials in Greenwood said Wednesday that the town will be home to a new training facility for Marines. The new center will be built at the Greenwood airport, Greenwood County Councilman Rhett Dominick said. He said that the facility will play host to Marines from Camp Lejeune for eight-week sessions each year. Dominick said that when the facility is not being used by the military, area law enforcement agencies will use it for training. The center should be complete by August or September, Dominick said.

May 3, 2010

Boeing is bringing another plant to South Carolina. The aircraft maker announced Monday it will create about 150 jobs by building a plant to assemble the interiors for its new 787 jetliner. The company said it hasn't decided an exact location for the new plant, but it wants the inside of the planes made within 20 minutes of the jetliner assembly line being built in North Charleston and scheduled to open in July 2011. Boeing officials wouldn't say how much the company is investing in the new plant. The company picked South Carolina for a second site to build its latest jetliner, expanding from its longtime Washington manufacturing base to take advantage of incentives and a nonunion work force.

May 4, 2010

A safety equipment manufacturer plans to put a plant in South Carolina that will employ 45 people. Multiple media outlets reported that Allegro Industries plans to spend nearly \$4.5 million on a plant in Pickens. Allegro makes industrial safety products, including respirators, respirator accessories and ventilator products. The plant will handle manufacturing, design, and research and development. Pickens County Council approved two incentive packages Monday evening, including land and a fee instead of property taxes on the operation. The plant should be open by the middle of 2011.

May 6, 2010

The South Carolina Education Department is laying off 80 employees as it deals with budget problems. The State newspaper reported Friday that the layoffs come after the agency eliminated 120 positions through attrition in the last year. State Education Superintendent Jim Rex said that the agency is losing experience and expertise. Rex spent Thursday notifying the affected workers. They include auditors, curriculum specialists and staffers who help schools implement technology. None of the department's 450 mechanics and other bus shop employees are being laid off. The state has about 5,000 buses. Rex said that the agency's employment has been cut by 13 percent since he took office in 2007. A survey released this week showed about 2,500 teachers are expected to be laid off.

May 11, 2010

Hotel clerks along the Gulf Coast are busy answering calls about a massive oil spill and whether they will refund the money of vacationers who have booked rooms there. The answer is typically no. Phones are also steadily ringing for tourism officials hundreds of miles away at Atlantic Coast beaches like Hilton Head Island, S.C., as they delicately try to lure vacationers away without appearing to profit from the disaster. Millions of gallons of oil have spewed from a well at the ocean floor since an offshore drilling rig exploded in the Gulf on April 20. Balls of tar began washing up on an Alabama beach over the weekend. Vacationers who have already booked are tracking the spill online, and many have been told they will face a steep penalty for backing out.

May 11, 2010

Greenville Hospital Systems said Tuesday that it expects to lay off about 50 employees to help make up some of a multimillion dollar budget gap. According to a statement, the 50 employees represents less than one-half of one percent of the hospital's total work force. Those job cuts will happen by the end of June. Officials at GHS also said that 50 other open positions temporarily will not be filled. GHS said it is working with the affected workers to help place or prepare them for other jobs. Hospital officials said that GHS is facing a \$10 million budget gap because the network is seeing fewer patients than expected. They said that the group also has not seen an increase in payments from government programs.

May 11, 2010

Upstate Sen. David Thomas told FOX Carolina on Tuesday afternoon that Southwest Airlines will be coming to Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport. Dave Edwards, executive director of GSP, said that Southwest will begin service at the airport within 12 months, but no specific date could be given. He said that there was no word on which destinations will be serviced from the airport. Southwest said it would release those details at a later date. A news conference was also held at Charleston International Airport at 2 p.m., making the same announcement. "We look forward to serving the Palmetto State with Southwest Airlines' unique brand of genuine hospitality, great value, a robust and reliable flight network, and our terrific employees who deliver excellent customer service," said Dave Ridley, Southwest's senior vice president of marketing and revenue management. State lawmakers have recently considered an incentives package aimed at attracting a low-cost airline carrier to the state. Southwest, which is based in Dallas, said that its decision to service the two South Carolina airports does not hinge on the passage of the legislation. South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford said he commends Southwest's decision to serve the Palmetto State. "While this announcement will certainly create much needed jobs across the state and go far in helping improve South Carolina's business climate as well as affording more choices to the South Carolina traveler," Sanford said in a statement, "it also represents what I believe to be one of the best things about our economy and nation at large, namely, that free markets work, and that businesses will oftentimes expand to areas where market demand exists." Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest on this developing story. Watch FOX Carolina News @ 6:30 for complete coverage.

May 18, 2010

South Carolina ushers in a new era of tourism with the first cruise liner to be permanently based in the state. Carnival Cruise Lines is basing its 2,056-passenger Carnival Fantasy in Charleston, and the first cruise leaves on Tuesday. This year, there will be a total of 67 cruise calls in Charleston. The State Ports Authority is making plans to open a new cruise terminal in a renovated building on the waterfront. A study for the authority in February found the cruise industry will mean \$37 million for the state economy this year.

May 18, 2010

The purchase of the Greenville bank announced Monday adds 176 locations to the Canadian bank's holdings in the southeastern United States. South Financial was the subject of Federal Reserve enforcement action May 4, after the bank has suffered more than \$1.3 billion in losses since 1998 because of loan charges related to real estate. The enforcement action prohibits the bank from declaring or paying dividends without approval from the Fed. The Toronto bank will pay \$61 million in cash or stock to shareholders and \$131 million to the U.S. Treasury Department. South Financial operates under the Carolina First and Mercantile Bank brands in the Carolinas and Florida.

May 20, 2010

The number of people filing new claims for unemployment benefits unexpectedly rose last week by the largest amount in three months. The surge is evidence of how volatile the job market remains, even as the economy grows. Applications for unemployment benefits rose to 471,000 last week, up by 25,000 from the previous week, the Labor Department said Thursday. It was the first increase in five weeks and the biggest jump since a gain of 40,000 in February. The forecast had been for claims to fall by around 4,000 from the previous week. "Although no one expects this volatile series to go in one direction every single week, this is clearly a disappointment," said Jennifer Lee, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets. Stocks slid at the opening bell, shortly after the release of the jobless claims report. The Dow Jones industrial average was down more than 200 points in the first 15 minutes of trading. The total was the highest since new claims stood at 480,000 on April 10. It also pushed the average for the last four weeks to 453,500. Employers are hiring again, but not at levels needed to make a dent in the unemployment rate, which increased in April to 9.9 percent. An improving economy has lured those who had given up looking for work back into the labor market. The jump in the unemployment rate came even though payrolls rose last month by 290,000 jobs, the biggest gain in four years. Analysts could trim their forecasts for job growth in May based on the sudden rise in new claims. The increase occurred in the week that the government conducts its survey for the monthly unemployment report. The number of people receiving jobless benefits fell by 40,000 to 4.63 million for the week ending May 8. However, that figure does not include unemployed workers who have exhausted their regular 26 weeks of benefits. An additional 5.3 million workers are receiving extended benefits paid for by the federal government for the week ending May 1. The extended benefits have added as many as 73 weeks of unemployment on top of the 26 weeks customarily provided by the states. But jobs have been scarce for so long that many of those out of work will soon run out of the extended benefits. For the week ending May 8, 35 states and territories saw increases in applications for new jobless benefits and 18 saw declines. The largest increase came in California, up 8,351 because of layoffs in service industries and manufacturing. It was followed by Michigan, up by 3,175 because of layoffs in the auto industry. The states with the largest declines in jobless application were: New York, down by 3,144, because of fewer layoffs in transportation, services and manufacturing; and Kentucky, with a drop of 2,193.

May 20, 2010

A study released Thursday said that South Carolina's new Boeing Co. plant will mean about \$6 billion a year to the state economy, once it is operational. The study was compiled by Harry Miley. The Columbia economist was chief economic adviser to the late Gov. Carroll Campbell. The study finds that, during its first 30 years, the North Charleston plant will generate close to \$3 billion in state tax revenues. That is far more than the cost of state incentives. Last year Boeing selected North Charleston for a \$750 million aircraft assembly plant. The largest single industrial investment in South Carolina history is expected to create 3,800 jobs. The study was commissioned by the Alliance for South Carolina's Future, a nonprofit that works for economic growth.

May 20, 2010

About 130 jobs are in jeopardy after a distribution center in Jonesville announced it will close within the next year. According to a statement from Disney Consumer Products, DisneyStore.com has decided to consolidate its facility in Jonesville with another distribution center in Memphis. The company said that select employees at the Jonesville center will be offered an opportunity to relocate to Memphis. The distribution center was opened in northern Union County in 1997. Union County currently has one of the highest unemployment rates in South Carolina, which was at 19.2 percent in March.

May 21, 2010

South Carolina's unemployment rate has dropped for the third month in a row, going down more than half a point to 11.6 percent in April. The figure released Friday by the Department of Employment and Workforce matches a recent state low set in September. Officials said that the state's labor force dropped more than 6,000 in April because fewer people lost their jobs, and fewer people started looking for new ones. Non-farm jobs went up by 13,000 in April, with seasonal gains in retail and hospitality sectors. The national jobless rate went up slightly, to 9.9 percent. Friday's release is the first since Gov. Mark Sanford appointed retired Air Force Brig. Gen. John L. Finan to run the new Workforce Department agency until March 2011.

June 2, 2010

A new automotive production facility to be located in Mauldin will bring 30 jobs to the area, officials said Wednesday. Eberspaecher North America's new facility represents a \$5 million investment and will open in August 2010. "We are pleased to be located our new facility in the South Carolina Upstate," said Eberspaecher President and CEO Dennis Berry. "The location will put us very close to our customer, BMW, and provide us with an excellent business environment in which to operate." The Germany-based company already has plants in Alabama, Michigan and Ontario. The company creates exhaust technology, vehicle heating and air-conditioning systems. Its customers include almost all European and North American and some Asian car makers. Hiring for the jobs at the Mauldin location began in December 2009. Anyone interested in the remaining open positions should e-mail their resume to hr.sc@eberspaecher.com.

June 9, 2010

A fire damaged an Anderson County plant on Wednesday that was to soon house a new tissue company. The fire was burning at the old Shaw plant on Masters Boulevard near Highway 29 at about 9 a.m. Anderson County Fire Chief Bill Gibson said that crews were using torches to remove old duct work at the plant. He said that fibers that had built up in the duct work when the plant was operational ignited. He said that the fire quickly spread because the material is highly flammable. Gibson said that firefighters have to get into the duct work to fight the blaze, which is extremely dangerous. He said that some of the duct work will have to be dismantled to reach the fire. Witnesses said that thick black smoke could be seen miles away rising from the site of the plant. Several crews were called in to help battle the blaze. The American Red Cross was also at the scene to provide food and water to firefighters. First Quality Enterprises Inc. announced in May that it was planning to bring 1,000 jobs to the county by moving in to the facility. Stay with FOX Carolina and foxcarolina.com for the latest on this developing story.

June 10, 2010

The foreclosure crisis appears to be leveling off. The number of people facing foreclosure is nearly flat from a year ago, according to the latest report from a private foreclosure listing service. A third fewer people are receiving legal warnings that they could lose their homes. And foreclosures are receding in some of the hardest-hit cities. Still, the number of foreclosures remains extraordinarily high. Experts caution that a big reason for the stabilization is that [banks](#) are letting delinquent borrowers stay longer in their homes rather than adding to the glut of foreclosed properties on the market. New consumer protection laws, which vary by state, have also meant borrowers can spend more time in their homes. A new wave of foreclosures could be coming in the second half of the year, especially if the unemployment rate remains high, mortgage-assistance programs fail, and the economy doesn't improve fast enough to lift home sales. "It's not anything like a recovery yet," said Rick Sharga, a senior vice president at RealtyTrac Inc., a foreclosure listing service. RealtyTrac reported Thursday that nearly 323,000 households, or one in every 400 homes, received a foreclosure-related notice in May. That was up 0.5 percent from a year earlier but down 3 percent from April. The report tracks notices for defaults, scheduled home auctions and home repossessions. But in a sign that the crisis is far from over, the number of homeowners who lost their homes to foreclosure hit a record of nearly 94,000 in May. That number may finally peak next year, as lenders try to work their way through millions of delinquent loans. Economic woes, such as unemployment or reduced income, are the main catalysts for foreclosures this year. Initially, lax lending standards were the culprit. Now, homeowners with good credit who took out

conventional, fixed-rate loans are the fastest growing group of foreclosures. A record high of more than 10 percent of homeowners with a mortgage had missed at least one payment as of the end of March, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. But the number of homeowners just starting to show trouble is trending downward as the economy improves. "That's a very good thing," said Thomas Lawler, an independent housing economist in Virginia. But he noted that even with that positive trend, "you are highly likely to see an acceleration in the number of actual completed foreclosures." Lenders are offering to help some homeowners modify their loans. But many borrowers can't qualify or they are falling back into default. The Obama administration's \$75 billion foreclosure prevention effort has made only a small dent in the problem. About 25 percent of the 1.2 million homeowners who started the program over the past year had received permanent loan modifications as of April. About 23 percent of those enrolled dropped out during a trial phase that lasts at least three months. Many more are in limbo. Among states, Nevada posted the highest foreclosure rate in May. One in every 79 households there received a foreclosure notice. However, foreclosures there are down 16 percent from a year earlier. Arizona, Florida, California and Michigan were next among states with the highest foreclosure rates. Rounding out the top 10 were Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Utah and Maryland. Las Vegas continued to be the city with the nation's highest foreclosure rate, but activity there was down 18 percent from a year earlier. And nine out of the top 10 cities with the highest foreclosure rates posted annual declines. The exception was the Vallejo-Fairfield area in California, where foreclosures were up 1 percent from a year ago. Foreclosed homes are typically sold at steep discounts, lowering the value of surrounding properties. That's a concern for local communities, and a drag on the economic recovery. In recent months, home prices have started to sink again after stabilizing last summer. Economists at Goldman Sachs predicted in a report last week that prices will fall about 3 percent nationally over the next year, with the largest declines in cities where mortgage defaults are rising. "The housing market remains plagued by enormous excess supply," wrote Goldman economist Sven Jari Stehn.

June 10, 2010

A Paris-based company said Wednesday that it is expanding its operations at its facility in Travelers Rest. Saint-Gobain Abrasives announced that it is spending \$1.4 million to increase the capacity of its Upstate plant. The company said it is closing its facility in Arden, N.C., and consolidating operations in its Travelers Rest operation. A company spokesman said that there could be a few new positions created, but that most of the staff will be transferred from Arden. Construction on the expansion is expected to begin next month. Saint-Gobain makes materials used in automobile and aerospace manufacturing.

June 10, 2010

Stocks surged Thursday after reports on the U.S. job market and Chinese exports lifted anxiety about the global economic recovery. The Dow Jones industrial finished 273 points up in afternoon trading. All the major indexes climbed more than 2.5 percent. Falling Treasury prices pushed interest rates higher after demand for safe investments eased. Energy stocks led the market higher after sliding in the final hour of trading Wednesday on concerns that BP would be forced to cut its dividend because of fallout from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. BP rose 11.3 percent off of a 14-year low, while Anadarko Petroleum Corp., which has a minority stake in the rig that caused the spill, rose 10.1 percent. Goldman Sachs Group Inc. fell 2.8 percent to its lowest level in a year following news reports that it was target of another investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The SEC has already filed civil fraud charges against the company. Investors have pounded stocks for more than a month because of concerns that Europe's sovereign debt crisis would slow a rebound worldwide. Thursday's climb was the latest swing in market that has been volatile for weeks, including three late-day slides in the past four days. Some of the advance could be coming from what's known as "short-covering." That's when traders are forced to buy stock after having earlier sold borrowed shares in a bet that the market would fall. The moves can add to the market's climb. Markets around the world rose after China said exports rose 48.5 percent in May, while imports jumped 48.3 percent. The increase in trade provides some relief to fears that debt problems in Europe would halt a global economic recovery. The 27-nation European Union is China's largest trading partner. China has said it wanted to cool its economy to keep it from getting overheated and forming speculative bubbles. Traders had grown concerned that China would inadvertently slow growth too much and hurt a global rebound. "China so far has been able to pull this off," said John Apruzzese, partner and equity portfolio manager at Evercore Wealth Management in New York. "There's more focus on Europe but I think it's more about China." In the final hour of trading, the Dow rose 257.71, or 2.6 percent, to 10,156.96. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 30.95, or 2.9 percent, to 1,086.64, while the Nasdaq composite index rose 57.52, or 2.7 percent, to 2,216.37. "We've all become a little gun-shy," Brian Lazorishak, portfolio manager at Chase Investment Council in Charlottesville, Va., referring to the last-hour slides the market has seen in recent weeks. Brian Lazorishak, portfolio manager at Chase Investment Council in Charlottesville, Va., said he wants to see the market at least hold its gains for a few days before he considers Thursday's advance as more than a blip. "We've all become a little gun-shy," he said. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, which moves opposite its price, rose to 3.32 percent from 3.18 percent late Wednesday. The euro, used by 16 countries in Europe, rose to \$1.2106. The

currency has become an indicator of investor confidence in Europe's economy. It has also influenced stock markets in recent weeks because of concerns that rising debt in countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal would upend the global recovery. While investors worry about how Europe's debt problems could hurt the rest of the world, there are also concerns about the job market in the U.S. An unemployment rate of 9.7 percent remains one of the biggest obstacles to a strong domestic rebound. The Labor Department said new claims for unemployment fell by 3,000 to a seasonally adjusted 456,000. While that figure fell short of economists' forecast, investors were heartened by figures showing total claims last week dropped by the largest amount in almost a year. Total unemployment benefit rolls fell by 255,000 to 4.5 million. On its face the drop is good news but there it could also indicate that people have run out of their state benefits and are moving to longer-term federal benefits. Still, the drop in total claims provides some hope that laid-off workers are starting to find jobs. It was welcome relief after the Labor Department said last week that private employers slowed their hiring in May to the lowest levels since January. Crude oil rose \$1.10 to \$75.48 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Gold fell. Among energy stocks, BP PLC rose \$3.30, or 11.3 percent, to \$32.50, while Anadarko rose \$3.52, or 10.1 percent, to \$38.35. Goldman fell \$3.79, or 2.8 percent, to \$133.01. It traded as low as \$131.30, below a previous 12-month low of \$134.20. About 2,600 stocks rose on the New York Stock Exchange, while only about 400 fell. Volume came to 914 million shares, compared with 1 billion traded at the same point Wednesday. The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies rose 18.41, or 3 percent, to 636.70. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 0.9 percent, Germany's DAX index rose 1.2 percent, and France's CAC-40 rose 2 percent. Japan's Nikkei stock average rose 1.1 percent.

June 18, 2010

South Carolina's unemployment rate has dropped for the fourth month in a row, registering 11 percent in May. The Department of Employment and Workforce said Friday that the rate was down one half a percentage point from the revised 11.5 percent rate in April. Officials said that the state's total employment increased by 3,300 jobs in May. Non-farm jobs went up by 22,000 in May, with the biggest increase in government hiring, mostly because of the hiring of workers for the U.S. Census. The hospitality and business services sectors also had major increases. The national jobless rate had dropped slightly in May, to 9.7 percent. Marion County had the highest jobless rate, at 18.6 percent. Aiken County had the lowest rate at 7.4 percent.

Attachments



Quality of Life

**ADDRESSING PROBLEM/NEED
SECOND QUARTER 2010**

Problem/Need: **QUALITY OF LIFE**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>
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Sundays 6:00am		MOUNT MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH
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Description: A church service airing Sunday mornings. (1-hour)

Sundays 8:30am		MUD CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
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Description: A church service that airs every Sunday morning. (30:00)

Sundays 9:30 am		TAYLORS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
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Description: A church service that airs every Sunday morning. (30:00)

Sundays 10:30am		FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Description: A church service that airs every Sunday morning. (30:00)

April 2, 2010

About 190 U.S. Army reservists from South Carolina are heading to Wisconsin for training before being deployed to Afghanistan. An Army spokesman said Thursday that members of the 323rd Engineer Company are volunteering for the yearlong deployment. The unit is based in Spartanburg. The soldiers will remove roadside bombs, which insurgent forces in Afghanistan use to attack military units and convoys. Some soldiers are veterans of the unit's earlier deployments to Afghanistan in 2005 and 2006. A farewell celebration is scheduled April 12 before the unit goes to Fort McCoy in Wisconsin.

April 8, 2010

Dangerous gases forced rescue crews to abandon the search Thursday for four coal miners missing since an explosion killed 25 colleagues in the worst U.S. mining disaster in more than two decades. Rescuers had been working their way through the Upper Big Branch mine by rail car and on foot early Thursday, but officials said they had to turn back because of an explosive mix of gases in the area they needed to search. "We think they are in danger and that's the whole intent of evacuating them from the mine," said Kevin Stricklin of the Mine Health and Safety Administration. "We couldn't let the rescue teams underground any longer based on the readings." The rescuers made it to within about 500 feet of an airtight chamber with four days worth of food, water and oxygen where they hoped the miners might have sought refuge. They did not make it far enough to see the bodies of the dead or determine if anyone had made it to the chamber. Stricklin acknowledged the evacuation was a setback. An executive with mine owner Massey Energy Co. said later that he hoped crews could get back into the mine around 7 p.m., after crews finished drilling a hole was to allow fresh air in. Officials weren't sure what caused the gas levels to rise but said it could have been a drop in barometric pressure as a storm rolled in. The rescue crews were leaving their equipment behind so they did not have to lug it back in with them when they returned. They knew where the bodies would be because rescuers made it that far after the explosion Monday before gases forced them out of the mine. Stricklin said the families of the dead and missing understood the need to pull rescuers out again. "It's a roller coaster for these people," Stricklin said. "It's very emotional. You can only imagine what it would be like." Rescuers had already had to wait to enter the mine until crews drilled holes deep into the earth to ventilate lethal carbon monoxide and highly explosive hydrogen as well as methane gas, which has been blamed for the explosion. The air quality was deemed safe enough early in the day for four teams of eight members each to go on what officials were still calling a rescue mission, but later tests showed the air was too dangerous to continue. J. Christopher Adkins, chief operating officer of Massey Energy Co., said at a briefing Thursday afternoon that rescuers were angry they had to turn back. He also described the scene when they went in. "They see a horrendous explosion and a lot of destruction," he said. He also said that workers may have found an alternate route that will allow them to get to where they need to be faster when they can safely go back into the mine. Once that happens, rescuers will have to walk through an area

officials have described as strewn with bodies, twisted railroad track, shattered concrete block walls and vast amounts of dust. Each team member wears 30 pounds of breathing equipment, lugs first-aid equipment and must try to see through total darkness with only a cap lamp to light the way. Officials and townsfolk acknowledged they didn't expect to find any of the four missing miners alive more than two days after the massive explosion. Poisonous gases have filled the underground tunnels since Monday afternoon's blast. "This was a scenario that we didn't want," Gov. Joe Manchin said as he briefed reporters about the evacuations. Families of those still in the mine continued to arrive at a training center there to await word of their fate, and Manchin estimated that perhaps 100 have gathered so far. "They understand that if we have any hope of survival and they're in a rescue chamber, then they're OK," Manchin said. "That's the sliver of hope we have." Seven bodies had been brought out Monday and authorities hoped to recover 18 others known dead from the mine owned by Massey Energy Co., which has been cited for numerous safety violations. The mine is outfitted with air-quality sensors that shut down some of the mining machinery when methane levels reach a high level. Manchin said it's unclear whether the methane levels reached that point prior to the blast, or whether the sensors detected it. However, the positioning of several bodies in an underground rail car begs the question: "Did a sensor not go off?" the governor said Thursday. "The miners that they found, it doesn't look like anyone was alarmed or warned that something as this horrific was going to happen," Manchin said. "When you find people just sitting in the mantrip, as if they're just waiting to go out and they're still there? That tells me there was no panic." Even with high gas levels inside the mine, there must have been a source of ignition, Manchin said, and it's unclear what that might have been. The Mine Safety and Health Administration has appointed a team of investigators to look into the blast, which officials said may have been caused by a buildup of methane. Massey has been repeatedly cited for problems with the system that vents methane and for allowing combustible dust to build up, including two large fines assessed in January when federal inspectors found dirty air flowing into an escapeway where fresh air should be, and an emergency air system flowing in the wrong direction. Miners were so concerned about the conditions that several told their congressman they were afraid to go back into the mine. Even the day of the blast, the federal mine agency cited the mine for two safety violations, one involving inadequate maps of escape routes, the other concerning an improper splice of electrical cable. Stricklin said, however, that those violations had nothing to do with the explosion. Massey CEO Don Blankenship has strongly defended the company's record and disputed accusations from miners that he puts coal profits ahead of safety. On Thursday, he began using the social networking site Twitter to communicate about the disaster. "Pray for the families and the rescue workers," he tweeted. He also praised the rescue efforts and got in a dig at what he called the "indignity of much of the media." The Upper Big Branch mine produced more than 1.2 million tons of coal last year and uses the lowest-cost underground mining method, making it more profitable. It produces metallurgical coal that is used to make steel and sells for up to \$200 a ton -- more than double the price for the type of coal used by power plants. The confirmed death toll of 25 was the highest in a U.S. mine since 1984, when 27 people died in a fire at a mine in Orangeville, Utah. If the four missing bring the total to 29, it will be the worst U.S. coal mining disaster since a 1970 explosion killed 38 in Hyden, Ky. The effect of so many sudden deaths in the area's small coal-reliant communities started showing with obituaries for the victims appearing in local newspapers. The first five funerals were scheduled for Friday and Saturday. Miner William "Bob" Griffith's family was preparing for the worst. Griffith went to work Monday and never came home, said his brother, James Griffith, who also works at the mine. William Griffith's brother-in-law, Carl Acord, died in the explosion. "In my honest opinion, if anyone else survives it, I will be surprised," James Griffith said.

April 10, 2010

The Asheville Fire Department said 12 people were displaced by a fire at the River Ridge Apartments Friday. Crews responded to the blaze at about 10:15 p.m. to find that several units were already on fire and the residents had been evacuated. The fire spread into the attic as crews worked to save as much of the building as possible. Of the eight apartment units, six were heavily damaged. The fire was under control by 10:56 p.m., officials said. Emergency medical crews are currently on standby, but no injuries have been reported thusfar. The American RedCross is assisting the displaced residents. Investigators said they have not yet determined the cause of the blaze. The Asheville Buncombe Arson Task Force will be investigating the fire

April 12, 2010

An Army Reservist unit based in Wellford is headed to Afghanistan. On Monday afternoon, hundreds of family members, friends and community supporters gathered at Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium for a farewell ceremony for the 323rd Engineer Company. A total of 190 reservists from the unit are being deployed to Afghanistan. The soldiers will leave on Tuesday to go to Fort McCoy, Wis. While there, they will undergo specialized skills training to prepare for their mission in Afghanistan. The unit was also deployed to Afghanistan in 2005.

April 15, 2010

Two hikers are home safe after getting lost in Caesar's Head State Park Thursday evening. Lt. Tim Ridgeway, with the Greenville County Sheriff's Office, said they were found uninjured just before 11 p.m. near the Bald Rock area. The hikers, both 21 years old, left earlier in the day, intending to be back before dark. Officials said they were calm when they called for help. At one point, one of the hikers used the flash from a cell phone camera to help officials locate them by air.

April 20, 2010

A Western North Carolina town will get a presidential visit on April 23. The White House confirms that President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama will travel to Asheville, N.C., next Friday, where they will spend the weekend. No public events are planned at this time. The Obamas are expected to stay at The Grove Park Inn, according to sources with knowledge of the trip. The Grove Park Inn would not comment on any information regarding prospective guests at the hotel. However, Deborah Potter, a spokesperson for the inn, tells Fox Carolina that 10 presidents have been guests of The Grove Park Inn.

April 27, 2010

Hundreds of young soccer players in the Upstate and throughout the southeast won championship soccer games over the weekend. They received T-shirts for their wins during the Carolina Elite Soccer Academy tournament in Greenville County. However, it's what's on the shirt that caused some parents to raise an eyebrow. "At first, I didn't even see it," said Nancy Traurig, a parent of one of the players who received a T-shirt. "I didn't even notice it. One of the kids alerted us." Traurig's daughter said that a player from another winning team noticed something unusual about the shirt. "I didn't really think anything of it because it's so small and you know this is such a family-oriented place," Traurig said. The shirts have the word "hell" printed on them, as well as upside-down crosses and the number six in a couple of places. Some people said that these symbols are satanic. "It was nothing intentional," said Jack Puckett, the president of CESA. "No religious, or political messages in any way were intended." Puckett said that the T-shirt vendor just made a big mistake. "He pulled down font that he thought looked really cool and was edgy," Puckett said. He said that the vendor did not notice the word hell or the other symbols on the shirt. "The font clearly had some things with enough detail that they are offensive," Puckett said. "We apologize to our sponsors, to the families that were there and to members of our club for allowing that T-shirt to get out." However, Traurig said she is not upset with the T-shirt vendor at all. She said she does not think many other parents are either. "It's a great company and it was a mistake and you know what," Traurig said. "Every company makes mistakes." Puckett said that the shirts are being recalled and they will hand out hundreds of new shirts within a couple of days.

May 6, 2010

Samantha Soper hopes a flier in her hand will be the start of something special. "I just want to bring everyone together and promote anti-violence," Soper said. On Thursday, she went around Asheville and posted "We Are Not Bashful" fliers. She also created a Facebook page promoting an upcoming march. "A lot of it, to me, is just that I feel as if there's been a lack of collectiveness within our community," Soper said. "Not just the queer community, but in Asheville in general." The movement comes after two people said they were the victims of gay bashings. One girl said she was taunted and hit in the face on Cumberland Avenue on Sunday. Another man said he was also attacked by some young men on that same day. He said they beat him with a pipe and used gay slurs. However, Asheville police say neither one of them reported the incidents. Soper said that doesn't mean it didn't happen. "You don't want people to know that you were beaten up because of your sexuality or sexual orientation," Soper said. "Same thing with a rape or even a mugging." Soper said that members of the gay community and anyone else who wants to join to plan to meet at Tod's Tasties next Wednesday at 6 p.m. That's where the march will start and it will end at the Vance Monument on Pack Square. "I hope it goes peacefully and I hope it goes well," Soper said. "It could be really great for our community." Soper said she believes it is a step in the right direction to fight for the rights of everyone. "We all love each other," she said. "We all care for each other." Asheville police are encouraging anyone who is a victim of a crime to come forward and report it.

May 6, 2010

Police said that about \$10,000 was found missing from Anderson's finance division during a routine check of the books. Investigators said that they were made aware of the missing money on Monday. According to an incident report, the money was taken from the petty cash box in the personnel office between Aug. 3, 2009, and March 2, 2010. It said the box can be accessed by anyone at anytime. Anderson police said that the State Law Enforcement Division has been asked to conduct an investigation into the missing money to prevent a conflict of interest. The finance division handles payments for services and benefits to employees.

May 7, 2010

Thousands of people are expected to flood Main Street in downtown Greenville this weekend for the city's annual art festival, Artisphere. The annual arts festival runs from 4 p.m. Friday until 6 p.m. Sunday Main Street from Augusta to Broad will be closed during the festival. The festival features everything from visual arts to performing arts to culinary arts. It also includes 'Kidsphere,' which allows children to experience the arts in a hands-on environment. The outdoor events and performances are free, but things like food, drinks and some activities require tickets, which cost \$5 for a sheet of eight. Artisphere was recently named one of the top 20 events in the southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society.

May 7, 2010

Soper hopes a flier in her hand will be the start of something special. "I just want to bring everyone together and promote anti-violence," Soper said. On Thursday, she went around Asheville and posted "We Are Not Bashful" fliers. She also created a Facebook page promoting an upcoming march. "A lot of it, to me, is just that I feel as if there's been a lack of collectiveness within our community," Soper said. "Not just the queer community, but in Asheville in general." The movement comes after two people said they were the victims of gay bashings. One girl said she was taunted and hit in the face on Cumberland Avenue on Sunday. Another man said he was also attacked by some young men on that same day. He said they beat him with a pipe and used gay slurs. However, Asheville police say neither one of them reported the incidents. Soper said that doesn't mean it didn't happen. "You don't want people to know that you were beaten up because of your sexuality or sexual orientation," Soper said. "Same thing with a rape or even a mugging." Soper said that members of the gay community and anyone else who wants to join to plan to meet at Tod's Tasties next Wednesday at 6 p.m. That's where the march will start and it will end at the Vance Monument on Pack Square. "I hope it goes peacefully and I hope it goes well," Soper said. "It could be really great for our community." Soper said she believes it is a step in the right direction to fight for the rights of everyone. "We all love each other," she said. "We all care for each other." Asheville police are encouraging anyone who is a victim of a crime to come forward and report it.

May 18, 2010

An Asheville Goodwill worker said she found more than \$5,000 stuffed in a sock while sorting clothes that had been donated to the charity. Jocelyn Garnace, who works at the Goodwill store on Tunnel Road, said that the money fell at her feet while she was looking a nylon sock found in a bin of donated clothes. "I was sorting through this bucket when out it fell," Garnace said. "I went into the manager's office and said, 'Something is wrong! Look!'" The money, totaling \$5,365, was packed away in the sock, as well as pay stubs that dated back to 1975. Turns out, the money belonged to a 96-year-old Asheville woman, whose family said kept money hidden all over her house. "I had to turn it in," Garnace said. "It's not mine. I know I did the right thing." The money was returned to the elderly woman's niece, who said that she had just cleaned out her aunt's house last month while moving her to an assisted living facility. She said that she donated a lot of items, but never realized the wad of cash was among them. "I've found cash before, but nothing like this," Garnace said. Goodwill said it plans to reward Garnace, but did not say what that would entail. She said she'd like a plane ticket to the Philippines to visit her family. The store said that since news of the discovery, people have been coming in to the store asking to buy the pair of socks, one of which contained the cash, presumably for good luck.

May 19, 2010

The U.S. relief organization operated by evangelist Franklin Graham said that three of the group's workers have been abducted by armed men in the Darfur region of Sudan. Samaritan's Purse said in a statement on Tuesday afternoon that the missing workers include two Sudanese men and a 36-year-old woman from California. The Boone, N.C.-based group said it was working with U.S. and Sudanese officials to secure the safe return of the staff members. The organization would not release

more details in fear of endangering the workers. Samaritan's Purse said it has provided \$83.7 million in assistance to Sudan over the past decade. Other relief workers, including some from the Red Cross, have also been abducted in the Darfur region. Graham is the son of 91-year-old evangelist Billy Graham.

May 19, 2010

London has opened its first exercise playground for older people, with specially designed fitness equipment to help the capital's aging baby boomers stay fit. Organizers say people lined up at central London's Hyde Park beginning early Wednesday to use the equipment, which includes a sit-up bench, a cross-trainer and a stationary bicycle. The playground is aimed at people over 60, although the gentle exercise also helps patients recovering from operations. Madeline Elsdon, whose local residents' association won funding for the playground, said the idea was to provide a friendly outside gym where older people can socialize while exercising. The playground is free and modeled on similar play areas for the elderly in other European countries.

May 20, 2010

Fire heavily damaged a church in Anderson County on Thursday morning, causing the building's roof to collapse. The blaze happened at the Centerville Church of God on Whitehall Road at about 6:15 a.m. Fire Chief Billy Gibson said that the sanctuary was engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived. It took about 30 minutes to extinguish the flames. Fire crews were able to save the education wing of the church. Five fire departments responded. Investigators from the State Law Enforcement Division and the U.S. Department of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms are investigating the cause of the blaze. One member of the church told FOX Carolina's Will Jones that she is sad about the damage to their house of worship, but they are optimistic about the church's future. The church's pastor said that church has already planned to meet at an alternate location for services on Sunday.

May 27, 2010

Family members on Wednesday night were looking for a woman missing from a group home. Loved ones were searching for Melinda Denise Redfield, age 31, her sister Michelle Redfield said. The missing woman has the mental capacity of a 5- or 6-year-old child, her sister said. The search was happening on Old Fairview Road off exit 24 in Fountain Inn. Details about the missing woman had not been confirmed by officials on Wednesday night.

May 28, 2010

Soldiers who died in service of their country are being honored during a ceremony at a VA hospital in South Carolina. The public is invited to attend an early observance of Memorial Day scheduled for Friday at the Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia. VA spokeswoman Priscilla Creamer said the ceremony will be held in the main lobby of the medical center's surgical building. Lt. Col. Larry Murray, commander of the 2nd Battalion 60th Infantry Regiment at Fort Jackson is the keynote speaker. Murray has served in a number of battalion, brigade and general staff positions with U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

May 28, 2010

Representatives from the Heritage Park Amphitheater announced plans today for the third annual "Independence Day at Heritage Park" concert, which will take place Saturday, July 3, 2010. "The City of Simpsonville is extremely proud to offer this wonderful family celebration for the third year in a row," said Simpsonville Mayor Dennis Waldrop, "The sounds of the Greenville Symphony Orchestra are the perfect way to commemorate our country's birthday." In its second year, the concert drew more than 10,000 people to Heritage Park, an increase from 2008. Concert coordinators expect to see even more growth this year. Current sponsors include the Greenville County Recreation District, South Carolina [Bank](#) and Trust, Greenville Hospital System, Greenville County Council, the City of Simpsonville. The Greenville Journal, WORD, Magic 98.9 FM and Fox Carolina are the 2010 media partners. The gates will open at 5:30 p.m. for children's activities and the Greenville Symphony Orchestra concert will begin at 8:00 p.m. Along with a selection of patriotic favorites, the concert will once again showcase one of the Upstate's biggest fireworks displays and a cannon finale coordinated to the sounds of the 1812 Overture. Tickets will be available beginning Friday, June 4. Admission is \$5 per person in advance and \$10 per person the day of the show, \$5 for children ages 3-12 and free for those 2 and under. Additionally, the concert is also offering a VIP package to

include premier seating, parking and complimentary food and beverages. A rain date has been scheduled for July 4. For event and ticket information, please visit www.heritageparkamphitheater.com.

May 28, 2010

A new book headed to high school libraries features the first-hand experiences of 49 military veterans from South Carolina held as prisoners of war. The book titled "Heroes ... Survivors" will be released on Friday during a ceremony at the South Carolina Military Museum. Attendees will include veterans held prisoner during World War II and the Korean War. State schools chief Jim Rex will host the event. The first copy will go to a Columbia high school. Copies will eventually go to the libraries of each of the state's public high schools. The project involved the state chapter of American Ex-Prisoners of War and the state education agency. Organizers are seeking additional funding to send copies to middle schools, private schools and public libraries statewide.

May 31, 2010

The Greenville County Coroner's Office said that the body of a mentally challenged woman who walked away from a group home last week was found on Sunday afternoon. Melinda Redfield, 32, was found dead inside Fairview Street Baptist Church, the coroner's office said. Church members said they smelled an unusual odor coming from the attic and that's where they found her body. The coroner's office said that the woman died from hypothermia and that there were no signs of foul play. The death was ruled accidental. "I'm hurt and I'm frustrated because her mom thought that when she placed Melinda there that she was in good care," said Brent Hill, Redfield's cousin. "It didn't work out like she thought it would." Family members said that Redfield was placed at the Fountain Inn Community Residence a year ago after her mother suffered a stroke. The facility serves as a group home for people with disabilities. Hill said that Redfield suffered from seizures as a teenager, which caused problems with her mental development and left her with the mindset of a child. The family has a lot of unanswered questions about how Redfield was able to leave the home on Wednesday and why they were not contacted immediately, Hill said. FOX Carolina left messages with the facility about the family's concerns, but as of Tuesday morning those calls were not returned.

June 1, 2010

The South Carolina Sheriff's Association has selected Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright as South Carolina Sheriff of the Year for 2010. Wright will be honored at the SCSA annual conference banquet on July 14, 2010. This year's conference will be held at the Crown Plaza at Hilton Head, SC. Wright was selected for this honor from a group of 46 Sheriffs across the state. When notified that he had been selected Sheriff of the Year Wright stated, "I am honored to receive this award but it is a testimony to the hard work that is done by the men and women who work at the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office. There is no way I could ever do this job by myself!" Wright has been Sheriff of Spartanburg County since January 2005.

June 19, 2010

On Sunday, the family of a slain 41-year-old soldier from South Carolina remembered his life. The U.S. Defense Department said in a news release Saturday that Capt. Michael P. Cassidy, of Simpsonville, died June 17 in Mosul of noncombat-related injuries. Johanna Cassidy, Michael's wife, said her husband enlisted in the army after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. A spokeswoman for Fort Stewart had no details about Cassidy's death, and his wife said she is still not sure what happened to him. Johanna Cassidy said the Army told her they cannot release any information until a full report is made. In the meantime, Johanna Cassidy said she will remember him as a great and inspiring man. "We're so proud of him," she said. "He was my best friend, and I grieve because I'm going to miss him, but I do know that he did exactly what he wanted to do and I have a lot of pride -- a lot of pride." Johanna Cassidy said she was lost when she met Michael in Virginia. She said he approached her and asked if she needed help. At the time, Johanna Cassidy was a budget analyst in Washington, D.C. He was a computer specialist. She said her husband had many facets to his life -- he had been a carpenter, a computer specialist, and he became a chiropractor because he said he wanted to work with people. He was a member of the National Guard before signing up to serve full time. "He was so humble, so sweet, and so nice, and genuinely cared about people," said Johanna Cassidy. "It came through when he talked to you." Johanna Cassidy said she wanted to talk about her husband's life because she wants her 9- and 10-year-old daughters to remember their father as a hero and know that he died fighting for freedom. She said she will be meeting with a casualty assistance officer on Tuesday and will learn more details about her husband's scheduled burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Plans for a memorial service have not yet been made, she said. Michael Cassidy was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

June 30, 2010

As Independence Day approaches, an advocacy group has released a report saying more [funds](#) are needed to maintain three Revolutionary War sites in South Carolina. The report was released Tuesday by the National Parks Conservation Association. The association is a nonprofit group that supports the nation's national parks and works to educate lawmakers and the public about the importance of those parks. The report included assessments of three South Carolina sites: Kings Mountain National Military Park, the Cowpens National Battlefield and the Ninety Six Historic Site. The report found that the parks need more staff and [funding](#) for research to tell the stories of the battles and to maintain historic structures.